Dark Horizons
The Art of Peter Szmer

Through the
Eerie Years

Eric "The Goon"
Powell Interview

From The TOMB

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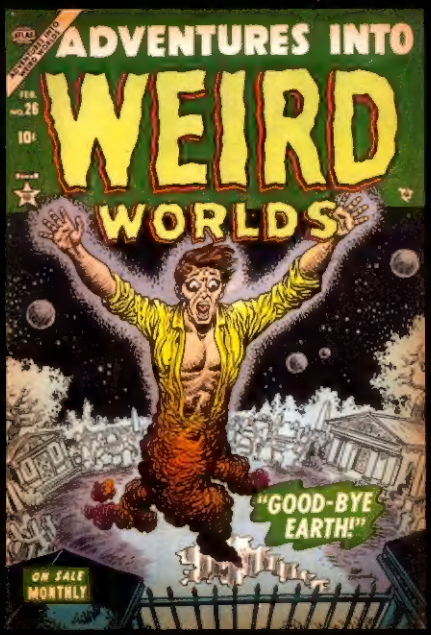
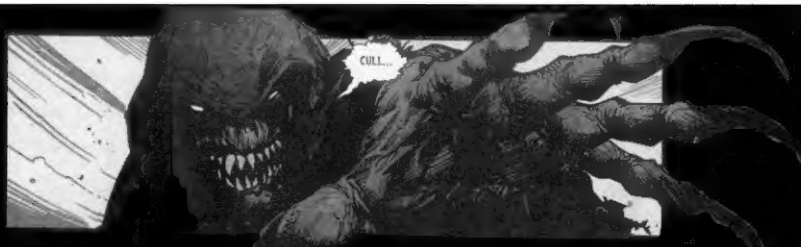
Barry Forshaw's Horror Comics Spotlight

Stan Lee's WEIRD WORLDS

I once had to interview Stan Lee (at the time of the UK release of Sam Raimi's first Spider-man movie), and it was soon clear to me that Lee was both tired and (though thoroughly professional) somewhat on autopilot in terms of his responses. In any case, I was far more interested in the Marvel writer/editor supremo's pre-superhero work (he had discussed Daredevil and co. a million times in exhaustive detail), and decided to ask him about the things I really wanted to know about — I already had enough about the Spider-man-related things required for the interview in any case.

I asked Lee why he still put himself through such punishing schedules (when with the money he was making from the Marvel films he could be sitting on a Californian veranda sipping a martini); I asked about his English wife; about nearly





FROM THE TOMB

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A WORD FROM THE TOMB...

Once again it's the summer months kiddies, time to hide in the shadows away from those overly long sunny days. Yeeucch! First of all apologies for the delay with this issue. I became involved with a big project earlier this year which took up all of my time. An announcement on this will appear in the Halloween issue. I don't think you will be too disappointed with the news.

A big thank you to James Fletcher for his painting adorning the cover to this issue. We discussed this months ago and it came out even better than I had imagined. James is on the very edge of some rather exciting assignments which will be of definite interest to anyone reading this.

Thanks also must also go to a very patient Eric Powell. When I set out to do this interview i didn't realise how many of these he had to do. How he finds time for The Goon is beyond me. Anyway it's time to go, see you at Halloween.

27 May 2007

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MUNICH IN THE YEAR 1871, ECCENTRIC GENIUS, PROFESSOR CARL VON HEIMER, DISCOVERED WHAT HE THOUGHT WAS THE SECRET OF LIFE!...THE MYSTERY THAT HAS DEFIED SCIENTISTS SINCE THE BEGINNING OF TIME! VON HEIMER WAS TO LEARN, HOWEVER, THAT HE HAD ACTUALLY DISCOVERED...
IT!
HIMMEL! LOOK, GRETA! LOOK! MY MASSES OF PROTOPLASM! THEY BREATHE! AND SOON THEY WILL LIVE!
CONFIDENT THAT HE HAD CONQUERED THE RIDDLE OF THE AGES, PROFESSOR VON HEIMER WENT BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY'S EXECUTIVE BOARD TO INFORM THEM OF HIS STARTLING DISCOVERY!...NEVER DREAMING THAT HE WOULD BE DENIED!
THAT'S ABSURD, PROFESSOR! WE'LL HEAR NO MORE OF IT! YOU MUST LEAVE THE UNIVERSITY IMMEDIATELY!

working with French director Alain Resnais (a comics fan), and several things that had he had not been asked before. Lee notably perked up, and I began to get some really fresh and interesting responses. However, despite a lengthy discussion of the credit wars between himself, Jack Kirby and Steve Ditko (half of which I knew I could never put into print!), I drew something of a blank when I asked him about the comics subject that most interested me personally: Lee's Trojan output for such legendary Atlas horror comics as **Adventures into Terror, Menace, Astonishing** and (before it became a superhero title) **Journey into Mystery**. Lee was notably less voluble on this subject that he had been on others.

'*Actually*', he said, '*Publisher Martin Goodman and I didn't really do much in the horror comics line before the start of the monster books — and then we really hit paydirt with the superhero titles.*' What was I to say to this? Lee was obviously being as truthful as one could wish — was this an example of memory changing the facts to more suitable proportions? I certainly wasn't going to argue with Lee (particularly as we were getting on so well) and remind him that Atlas had produced more horror comics than any of its rivals (even the market leaders, the much-acclaimed EC line), and that (along with such professionals as Hank Chapman), he had written the comics equivalent of **War and Peace** in terms of sheer word count. He did, however, admit to me something which I also heard from the lips of SF writer Harry Harrison when telling me about his days at EC (when he was the less talented half of the Wally Wood/Harry Harrison art duo): he didn't admit at parties that he wrote for the comics in the days when anti-comics hysteria was at its height — better to admit to being a criminal or terrorist than being one of those creatures who were corrupting the youth of America (and, at one remove, the youth of Britain — such as this writer, via the sporadically available material we eagerly consumed in the UK).

Ironically, while Lee is certainly the most influential editor in comics (closely followed by Julius Schwartz and his work on DC superheroes and such SF classics as **Mystery in Space** and **Strange Adventures**, I got the impression from talking to Lee that he was most proud of his writing skills — and it's certainly true that they were fully exploited in his Atlas horror comics days. Admittedly, he never matched the EC team of Feldstein and Gaines in terms of invention and elegance, and many of his scripts were banal and clichéd. But (at his best) he created — along with the matchless team of artists available to him at Atlas — some of the liveliest and most gruesomely entertaining comics of the 1950s before the censorship axe decimated the industry. And my failed attempts to discuss with him the books he worked on back then were frustrating, particularly as he world swerve onto the post-code monster books with Kirby and Ditko, as if they were the far more interesting than the horror titles (despite the presence of the inestimable Jack and Steve… they weren't). Certainly, Lee had not the slightest memory of a particular book that I invoked… **Adventures into Weird Worlds**, issue **26**.

But before taking a look at that, let's examine some of the other contemporaneous writing available — which is a salutary reminder of just how bad most of it was! In the same way that we think of the great days of pulp fiction as

THE DEAD
HEY, WHAT'S GOING ON HERE? WHY'S EVERYTHING LOCKED UP? WHAT'S EVERYONE RUNNING AWAY FROM? WHAT'S HAPPENED TO THIS TOWN?
TERRIFYING MYSTERY FROM A WEIRD WORLD!

I...I CAN'T UNDERSTAND! I'VE ONLY BEEN GONE FOR FOUR DAYS... AND IT LOOKS LIKE EVERYONE'S GONE... HIDING... OR DEAD!
MARY! AND THE KIDS! WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM? THEY'VE GOT TO BE ALIVE! I'LL NEVER FORGIVE MYSELF FOR LEAVING...

being characterised by the Titans Raymond Chandler and Dashiell Hammett, (and easily forget the acres of dire prose above which those two giants quickly rose), it's hardly surprising that our fond memories of 50s horror comics often centre on the wonderfully sophisticated writing of EC comics, when other companies that did just as well financially got by on splendidly garish art rather than solid scripting. Case in point? The Harvey horror comics line. While that company survived the lowering of the boom with its anodyne kiddie titles (as it consigned its more blood-boltered titles such as **Tomb of Terror** to oblivion in light of the Kefauver committee-inspired witch hunts), there's no denying the sheer exuberance of the Harvey books, distinguished as they were by some of the most eye-catching illustration in the field from such giants as Bob Powell, Rudy Palais and Howard Nostrand (the latter may have ripped off superior talent such as Jack Davis and Wallace Wood, but he did so with great panache!).

But the writing in Harvey horror comics! My God, the writing! While Lee's Atlas books and other comics lines were at least logical and well constructed in terms of plots, the Harvey books appear to be written by someone for whom English was a second language and (moreover) had taken a considerable dose of some illegal substance to get through the onerous chore of writing this stuff. Very often, the Harvey books would establish a premise — monster or killer cutting a bloody swathe through its victims — and go absolutely nowhere with the premise. The clever, twist-ending plotting of the EC books with their well-rounded protagonists were nowhere to be found. It seemed to be enough that the visuals did the trick, drawing a colourful veil over the unspeakable writing. A good example is the Bob Powell

TURN THE LIGHTS DOWN LOW, KIDDIES, AND GET IN THE MOOD FOR ANOTHER JOURNEY INTO WEIRD WORLDS! OUR LEAD TALE IS ONE OF THE STRANGEST WE'VE EVER READ... AND WE BELIEVE YOU'LL RATE IT ONE OF THE GREATEST YOU'VE EVER CAST YOUR PEEPERS ON!
GOOD-BYE EARTH
TERRIFYING MYSTERY FROM A WEIRD WORLD!
NO! YOU CAN'T TAKE ME AWAY YET! I DON'T WANT TO GO! EARTH'S THE ONLY PLACE I KNOW... DON'T MAKE ME LEAVE!
MY NAME IS HARRY BURNS! I'VE NOT A WIFE AND TWO ADOPTED KIDS AND I'M NOT WORRIED AND THIS ALL REALLY DID HAPPEN TWO DAYS AGO, WHEN I CAME HOME FROM THE OFFICE...
THAT'S FUNNY! THERE'S A LIGHT ON IN THE GARAGE! WHO COULD BE THERE AT THIS TIME OF THE NIGHT?
WHO ARE YOU? WHAT ARE YOU DOING ON MY PROPERTY?
QUIET! DON'T MAKE A SOUND! THIS PARALYZER RAY CAN PRODUCE A VERY UNCOMFORTABLE SENSATION UNLESS YOU DO EXACTLY AS I SAY!

SO LET THAT BE A LESSON TO YOU: DON'T START BUILDING ROBOTS! HERE'S A GUY WHO'S HAVING THE STRANGEST DREAMS... OR ARE THEY DREAMS? ANYWAY, THEY'RE HORRIBLE ENOUGH TO DRIVE THIS GAL RIGHT TO ...
THE EDGE OF MADNESS
TERRIFYING MYSTERY FROM A WEIRD WORLD!
MADNESS WAS EATING INTO HER BRAIN TISSUE LIKE A CORROSIVE DISEASE THAT DISSOLVED LOGIC, AND INFLAMED REASON! IT DIFFUSED THOUGHT INTO A HIDEOUS NIGHTMARE! IF SHE DARED BREATHE HER SECRET, A STRAIT JACKET WOULD ENCAGE HER BODY!
TWILIGHT SLEEP, THE SLEEP THAT HOVERS BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH! THE SCANT MOMENTS OF THE NIGHT WHEN THE SOUL LINGERS ON THE BRINK OF ETERNITY!
SHADOW FALLS OVER LIZETTE RIDYS'S FACE AND ITS DARKNESS SMOTHERS HER BREATH AND TEMPTS LIFE TO END...

tale in **Witches Tales 10**, *"It!"* Mad scientist creates an amorphous monster that kills people. That's it — the plot in nine words; don't look for refinements or logic. The dialogue, too (as almost always with Harvey comics) is utterly unspeakable — just try it, sometime — read out a dialogue balloon from a Harvey tale, and you'll find yourself saying words that even the most crass of soap operas would shy away from.

But don't misunderstand me — these books remain highly collectable, and anyone with an interest in the horror comics genre has to have a good selection of Harvey books. Why? The art! Look at Bob Powell's wonderful treatment of the indifferent script he was given in *It!* — Powell is always looking for the new angle to present the murderous mayhem from, and his baroque style makes the tale tremendous fun. We even have a panel which gives the artist the chance to freight in a little of his trademark eroticism — as a serving girl is consumed by the blob-like horror, it starts to draw her dress down, revealing cleavage — the same effect that Powell did time and again in the classic *"Wall of Flesh"*. None of the other stories in **Witches Tales 10** match this, but the Powell story (and a lively Lee Elias cover) ensure a good time.

But perhaps you're looking for good writing along with impressive visuals? Then let's get back to Stan Lee and Atlas —I've got just the book for you.

It's hard today to remember when uncensored horror comics were extremely hard to come by — the hysteria that had engendered the Comics Code in the US and essentially neutered the industry and its UK equivalent (with questions asked in the Houses of Parliament) similarly made such material — what little there was of it — impossible to find (this period is intelligently discussed in Martin Barker's well researched book **A Haunt of Fears**). While comics readers growing up in the late 50s and early 60s enjoyed the code-approved material that was available to us in British

AARGH AND! SHE'S GOING TO YOU... NO!
SCREAM!
EEEEEEE!
CHEERIE...WHAT IS IT? WHY WERE YOU SCREAMING SO?
MENACE FROM MARS!
TERRIFYING MYSTERY FROM A WEIRD WORLD!

and Australian black-and-white reprint form, the rare appearance of what was clearly the genuine article was a source of rejoicing, and the cause of much frantic bartering in the playground. While British readers had seen the handful of EC reprints and enjoyed the avuncular tone of the ghoulish hosts as they described the bloody horrors we were about to read, we became more familiar with the black boxes that heralded Atlas stories, as much more of this material appeared in reprint form. These had no individual hosts, but the gleefully macabre tone of voice in the introductions was a delight, combining a promise of shuddering terrors in a very chatty, sardonic address aimed directly the reader. There were two things we Brits didn't know: these black boxes were a characteristic of the amazingly prolific Atlas Comics Group (such 68-page shilling reprints as the now highly sought-after **Spellbound** issue one removed the logo, usually substituting the words 'British Edition'). We also had no idea that the author of these introductions was none other than Timely/Atlas workhorse editor Stan Lee, who would later refine the art of talking directly to the reader as one of the key ingredients that ensured the success of his superhero titles such as **Fantastic Four** and **Spider-man**. But the black boxes promised delight, with beautifully drawn *contes cruelles* by such wonderful artists as Russ Heath, Bill Everett and the baroque and excessive Al Eadeh.

Still, however cherishable, these were still black-and-white reprints, and when the occasional colour original found its way to Great Britain (via, for instance, imports and ship's ballast) it was, indeed, manna from heaven. I was clutching such a treasure in my hands, as I made my way to a favourite Liverpool library by a route that my parents had expressly forbidden. It was a secluded walk by a railway track alongside the towering walls of Walton Gaol. These walls, of course, were far too high for anything to drop over from the other side, but a certain frisson came from thinking of the murderers and thieves incarcerated on the other side. But It was the secluded nature of the walk that worried my parents — people worried about paedophiles in the early 1960s also. Ironically, visiting that very walk on a return to Liverpool from London recently, I found it completely overgrown and impassable. In any case, I had an American horror comic in my hand, given to me by a friend at school who had decided to part with all his comics to take up the more adult sport of fishing (an action I regarded as idiotic, but didn't complain about, as I was on the receiving end of his benison). But what was the comic called? It had no cover — the first story (and the default cover) was called *"Goodbye Earth"*, with a shadowed man holding his hand up against an unseen creature that cast a distorted shadow over a farewell letter he had written. The shape of the unseen head showed that it wasn't human. There was the black box with the yellow writing introducing the tale: 'Turn the lights down low, kiddies, and get set for another journey into Weird Worlds! Our first tale is one of the strangest we've ever read....and we believe that you'll rate it one of the greatest you've ever cast your peepers on!'

So was that the title of the comic — **Weird Worlds**? Another black box shouted *"Terrifying Mystery from a Weird World"*, so that pretty well cinched it — several years passed before I realised that I was holding a coverless copy of **Adventures into Weird Worlds** issue **26**, from February 1954 (the indicia was on the missing cover) and that cover, I was to learn later, showed a terrified man hovering above a graveyard as the lower half of his

body dissolved into brown smoke — this eye-catching Joe Maneely illustration actually had very little to do with the story itself, in which man learns that he is living in a borrowed human body, and is part of an alien advance party. The tale itself was quite as well written as the EC stories I had already seen, with sharp characterisation and a genuine sense of loss as a man is forced to leave his family for his alien destiny. But the real kicker of the story lay in the face of the otherworld creature who informs the hero of his true nature — by removing his own rubber face to reveal a heaving green protoplasmic mass. This was a much nastier alien than those permitted under the code, and this tale was a wonderful curtain-raiser for the grisly delights to follow. I was later to learn that the illustrator was the workaday professional Paul Reinman, who turned in some of the sloppiest work in comics over his long career. Not here, though — either Stan Lee's inventive script inspired him to uncharacteristic heights, or Lee (in his editorial role) nagged Reinman into conjuring up something special. The icing on the cake, though, was the writing – unlike the Harvey approach mentioned above (establish a menace – let it kill for five pages), there was a framework and development here that made things much more creepy and disturbing than Harvey's unstructured bloodbaths.

"The Robot That Hated". How could one resist a tale with a title like that – and a splash panel showing the eponymous metal murderer, looking like a homicidal version of the Tin Man from **The Wizard of Oz**? But – wait a minute – he has jagged fang-like teeth! Who'd build a robot with jagged fang-like teeth? Only a villainous scientist with jagged fang-like teeth, as drawn by the underrated Al Eadeh. Ah, Al Eadeh – the poor man's Graham Ingels? Actually, Eadeh was not far behind the EC master in drawing the most grotesque and – let's face it – ugly vision of venal humanity in comics. Perfect for the legion of dark tales Stan Lee gave him — such as this one, with its killer twist ending. Eadeh had done sterling work for Simon & Kirby's **Black Magic** at Prize, but only really blossomed in all his fetid eccentricity under the Atlas umbrella.

The third tale is by one of the great unsung heroes of horror comics: the stylish Tony di Preta. While not remotely in the same league as the much-acclaimed Bernie Krigstein, di Preta has a similarly striking sense of design, and shared Krigstein's penchant for elongated bodies. He turned out a prodigious amount of work for Atlas in the 50s, but nothing as delirious and horrific as *"The Edge of Madness"* in this issue.

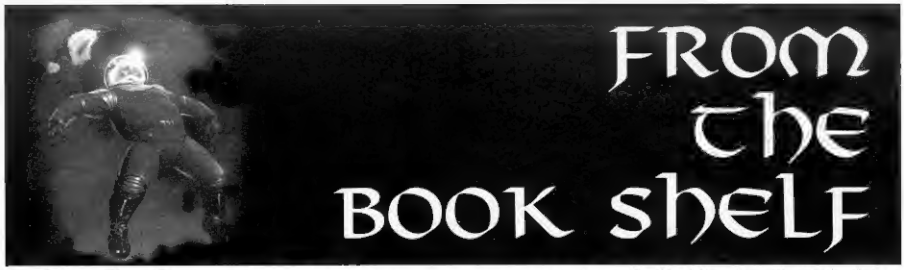
The splash panel establishes that this is a period piece, as a young girl runs shrieking in terror from a grotesque tentacled green monster with a single massive bloodshot eye. Reaching ambiguously towards her is a handsome young man in Cavalier apparel. The story — which is pitched at a nigh-hysterical level from which it rarely descends (and never explains its bizarre narrative) — shows the young woman racked by nightmares in which the monstrous apparition visits her, to mysteriously weep over her at her bedside (something monsters did very little of in 1950s comics). The second panel on page 2 gives the reader the first full close-up of her hideous visitor, but what makes it even odder is that the creature is wearing the same clothes (cape, feathered hat) as her handsome rescuer. And — spoiler coming up — the alert reader will quickly spot that Stan Lee is giving us another Jekyll and Hyde variation here, but with a piquant twist — two personalities appear (at some times) to inhabit one side each of the same body, and the final panel shows the schizophrenic man-monster stripped to the waist, its right side that of the green monstrosity, holding a large knife dripping blood, while the left side is that of the young man, similarly wielding a blood-smeared knife – both knives having been plunged suicidally into the joint body. And the sight of that vari-coloured body, bleeding from a variety of gashes, was as memorable a panel as any 1950s/1960s comics reader could hope for.

The penultimate tale, *"Menace from Mars"*, is almost the comic relief of the issue; at least to modern readers, with Stan Lee's 1950s commie-bashing informing the personality of the loathsome antihero, who ends up dragooned into the Martian army, ('A hitch in the Martian army is for life!) This, it is in fact, the issue's third science fiction tale, although the SF elements are mostly secondary to the horror agenda. This readiness to use the tropes of SF in a horror comic was one of the ways in which the Stan Lee books are markedly different from EC, who largely kept their horror and SF strictly separate.

The windup tale in **Adventures IntoWeird Worlds 26** is another gem, *"The Dead"* (no, not an adaptation of the James Joyce story, but a moody and bleak supernatural piece). The art is not as distinguished as elsewhere in the issue: journeyman illustrator Dick Ayers was to achieve his finest moments as an inker for Jack Kirby on the later monster books, but he turns in a perfectly serviceable job here.

There are many other collectable issues of **Adventures into Weird Worlds** to track down, but few offer the variety and imagination of issue **26**. And one other thing about the superiority of the writing over Harvey's: just note the amount of dialogue and descriptive blurbs in the Atlas book compared to **Witches Tales 10**. It's not only much more accomplished — you get a lot more of it! Quantity *and* quality...

FIN



A Manhattan Ghost Story £9.99 (plus £2.50 postage) T. M. Wright
Telos Publishing, 61 Elgar Avenue
Tolworth, Surrey KT5 9JP
www.telos.co.uk

There may be some of you who recall this tale, originally published almost twenty-five years ago. For those of you who haven't made its discovery you are in for that most special of treats. Mr Wright is a narrator blessed with an incomparable ability, don't take my word for it Stephen King and Ramsey Campbell have both been keen to extol the virtues inherent in his writing. This account harks to the earliest days of his literary career and on this early showing it was obvious he had so much to offer.

This is not the time-honoured ghost story with which you will be entirely familiar, and all those years ago back in 1984 it would have sown an unsettling seed for those who fell under its spell. The opening chapters are ever so deliberate in their orchestration of an infectious sense of unease and it is not long before that commonplace air of foreboding begins to plague you. You've been here before, but even with such insight this tale is not about to succumb to a premature climax, rather its disturbing premise intensifies to become all the more acute. Guided by a writer of this calibre it is so easy to put yourself in the place of this blighted individual who can see the dead; these I can assure you are not deluded visions.

While those aficionados of horror will be engrossed, it is a pervading air of pathos that hangs over these pages. They concern themselves less with the terrors lying beyond the grave and more with the melancholy of love lost. The presence of the unnerving supernatural is never far from this account, but it is a far cry from the putrefied zombie madness that has shambled through the last decade. Here there lingers an endless sadness compounded by an unyielding impression of despondency as to the plight of these the deceased. At the end of it all something inexplicable awaits in the darkness for each one of them. Yet even with this glimpse of an atrophied wilderness, life in New York goes on as we traverse the avenues of a typically mundane day to day cityscape. This book will do more than hold your attention, it will have you rushing home from work or missing your lectures. Mr Wright has much to answer for.

Postscripts 9 Winter 2006 £6.00 (plus £1.00 postage) PS Publishing, Grosvenor House, 1 New Road, Hornsea, East Yorkshire, HU18 1PG
www.pspublishing.co.uk

If you seek the means to venture to pastures new in this domain of fantastic fiction then look no further. Pete Crowther's PS Publishing have carved quite a reputation for themselves this last few years bringing to the public gaze an abundance of groundbreaking fantasy, horror and science fiction. With almost every new release comes a highly desirable signed slip case limited edition, which have proved immensely popular with an enthusiastic collector's market.

Postscripts is a showcase for the work of many of the writers on the company's current catalogue and also takes its time to introduces the next generation of talent. These one hundred and forty-four pages offer an eclectic mix of story telling which without exception will both engage and inspire. David Barnett's "*The End of the World Show*" was resplendent in its sheer unadulterated Englishness, I can't speak highly enough of this tale, while John Grant's "*The Unforbidden Playground*" threatens a world so many of us are coming to fear. This is fantastic fiction at its best, Vaughan Stanger's "*The Peace Criminal*" attempts to turn our own history on its head, proffering something never documented in our country's not always illustrious past. I could go on and on, for there is so much more to be had from this edition. Before you get the chance to explore any of these tales, Jeff Vandermeer's editorial will have that old grey matter between your ears in a spin, he debates the notion of a distinctly American, European or British brand of fantasy. The contention will no doubt continue for years to come.

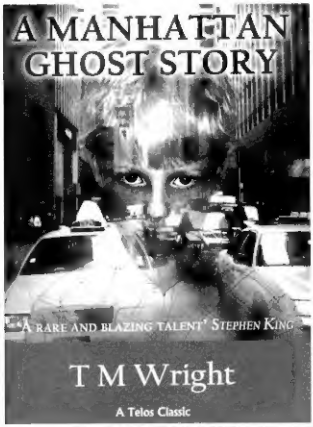
Okay this might be winter edition but this collection could be so easily be appreciated on a warm sunny afternoon lounging in your garden and as I write the new compilation for spring has just appeared.

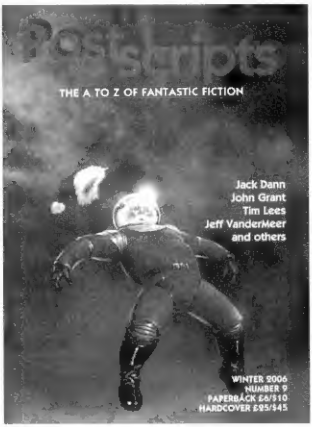
Time Hunter: The Sideways Door £7.99 (plus £1.50 postage) R..J. Carter & Troy Riser, Telos Publishing, 61 Elgar Avenue
Tolworth, Surrey KT5 9JP
www.telos.co.uk

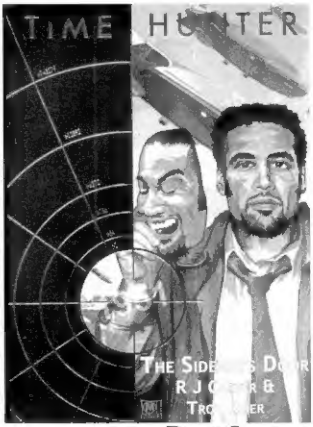
I had heard much of this series, but wasn't sure it was for me. On the surface an ongoing succession of novellas crisscrossing the timescape of an Earth we have come to know and one that might leave us hiding under the bed seemed a little juvenile. Once again I stand corrected; am I ever going to learn!

World War II veteran Honoré Lechasseur and his partner Emily Blandish, a denizen of Earth's future, meet their doubles in a parallel time-stream echoing the London of the early 1950s, which at first only seems slightly out of synch with real time. In a matter of pages the Messrs Carter and Riser very shrewdly throw their protagonists and the reader ever further out of kilter. The most minute of detail no longer tallies and then all is guilefully unveiled. This, the tenth and penultimate instalment of this series, has the effect of leaving you wanting to search out more. It can be read without having savoured that which has gone before, but there is a compelling sense of continuity, which insists you append to the excitement within.

With the welcome furore surrounding **Doctor Who** and the recent **Torchwood** spin-off this would make for a very good science fiction detective drama. It is imbued with all that would be required of exciting television based fantasy, characterisation, thought provoking situations often bordering on impossibility and a strong story-line with a bold sense of adventure. **The Time Hunter** series is worth a second look and may well evolve to become a cult of its own making.







Pre-Code Romance

by Richard Byard

Despite the occasional racy cover or lurid story title, most pre-code romance comics are not much different from their post-code counterparts. While some publishers were more provocative than others, at times implying pre-marital sex as a contributor to the woes of their largely high school aged heroines, usually the mind-numbingly redundant stories of romantic betrayal, both real and imagined, contain nothing more risqué than a stolen kiss to tantalize the reader. Many artists known for their attention to the female form contributed to this genre, but even aficionados of Good Girl Art have to admit that flipping through romance comics like some pathetic peeping tom in search of "lingerie panels" is only marginally rewarding, with far more skin bared in the average jungle comic from the era. Truthfully, compared to the bosomy, barely dressed heroines of today's funny books, let alone the graphic sexual content of modern "adult" comics, the whole GGA collector pre-occupation with 'headlights" and bondage seems rather quaint, but perhaps that more subtle sexuality is a big part of the appeal, like the glimpse of extra cleavage when a nicely endowed young woman leans forward.

Once in a while though, pre-code romance books would touch on topics later deemed taboo by the Comics Code Authority. One such topic was the illegal use of drugs for recreational purposes, specifically marijuana. The dangers of marijuana, while not frequently addressed, have been explored in comic books going back to the beginning of the Golden Age, first in the costumed hero books, and later largely in the crime comics of the post-war era. Writers of the time, no doubt influenced by government propaganda, unsurprisingly associated the consumption of marijuana with the desire to commit violent crimes, drive recklessly and seek bigger thrills with ever harder drugs, all to the unintended amusement of later generations of collectors with a more first hand knowledge of the consequences of cannabis consumption. While not too different in their assumptions about the drug, the marijuana stories found in the romance comics of the pre-code era have the added entertainment of squeezing both the love story melodrama and the insinuation of wayward sexuality into these cautionary tales.

The story *"Monkey on Her Back"* from **Youthful Hearts #1** (May 1952) is incorrectly identified in the Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide as a swipe of the E.C. classic *"The Monkey"* from **Shock Suspenstories #12**. The two stories do share similarities, but as the romance comic preceded the E.C. book by nearly two years, the question of who was swiping from whom should be revisited. The story opens with an intriguing splash panel in which our protagonist, young Mary Barnes, is being arrested for heroin possession. She is driven to city hall where she is compelled to tell her story to the mayor. A high school aged orphan, she is being raised by her older sister Ruth, who decides Mary needs to have more fun. She takes her to a party where she meets the decidedly older looking Jim Bevins. Ruth doesn't seem to mind that he gets her sister drunk, but when he tries to get Mary to smoke a "goofer stick", Ruth blows her top.

Before long Mary finds out her sister is mainlining heroin, and that her anger at the party was the result of own experiment with marijuana and the resulting need for bigger thrills that turned her into a dope addict. She feeds her habit by making deliveries for her dealer, Bart. One day when her older sister is too "sick" to make a delivery,

SWEETHEARTS
I WAS A MUSICIAN'S GIRL
DON'T GO WITH DRUMMER, LOUISE! HE'LL DRAG YOU DOWN INTO THAT PHANTIC WORLD OF HIS...AWAY OF YOU A FINE, BLOODLESS CREATURE OF THE RIGHT!
LUNCH
COME ON, BABE! DON'T LISTEN TO THAT SQUARE!
SO WHICH SHOULD LOUISE LISTEN TO THE DRUMMER BOY, WHOSE NAME WAS LEGEND IN THE WORLD OF RHYTHM SHE HAD COME TO WORSHIP? OR TO TED, WHO HAD ENDOWED HER A KIND OF MUSIC THAT COULD FLOURISH OUTSIDE THE DARK SHADOWS OF THAT CELLAR CLUBS?
THE HOURS FLEW BY---THE PARTY REACHED A HYSTERICAL CRESCENDO...
LOOK AT THE KID GO! SHE'S RIDING HIGH TONIGHT...
WHAT? THANK YOU,BUT I DON'T SMOKE...
COME ON...THIS ISN'T WHAT YOU THINK. IT'LL START YOU FLYING LIKE YOUR SISTER...
BEFORE LOUISE AS IT WAS, SLOWLY SOMETHING HORRIBLE...
WHY, THAT'S MARIJUANA?? OH NO, I COULDN'T! HAVEN'T YOU BEEN READING ABOUT DOPE IN THE PAPERS...?
HEY, HOLD IT! FUN'S FUN, BUT DON'T TRY TO FEED MY KID BIS THAT "HOOPER STICK"...
MUCH LATER THAT NIGHT...
RUTH--ARE YOU AWAKE? ARE YOU MAD AT ME? I'M SORRY, BUT JUST THE SAME, I'LL NEVER GO OUT WITH YOU AGAIN--NOT IF ALL YOUR PANTIES ARE LIKE THE ONE TONIGHT...
I'D BETTER FAKE SLEEP... THE KID'S UPSET--GUESS IT IS SORTA MY FAULT...
CONCEALED MOST SKILFULLY--CONSTANTLY COILED TO POUNCE UPON ITS HELPLESS PREY--AN INVISIBLE VIPER SILENTLY, RUTHLESSLY BREEDS OUT THE YOUTH OF AMERICA. THE FOLLOWING CASE IS THE HISTORY OF ONE INSTANCE WHERE THE LOATHSOME MONSTER WAS DRAMATICALLY BROUGHT OUT INTO THE OPEN. READ---IN ACTUAL WORDS AS TAKEN FROM THE OFFICIAL STENOGRAPHER'S TRANSCRIPT---THE STORY OF THE UNFORGETTABLE MISERY OF THE GIRL WITH THE...
MONKEY ON HER BACK
GOT HER---SHE HAD THE HEROIN ON HER, ALL RIGHT.
NO...NO...PLEASE! YOU'RE WRONG! I DIDN'T...I DON'T...PLEASE, LISTEN TO ME...
GOOD WORK! WE'LL TAKE OVER NOW, IT'S A FEDERAL OFFENSE...

Mary goes in her stead, the only way to get her sister another "pop" and relieve her suffering. Naturally, young Mary is picked up by the cops before making her delivery. After she has told her story, she rushes with the police to her apartment, where they are just in time to prevent Ruth from leaping out a window in her delirium. All ends well as Ruth goes in for treatment and the sisters agree to testify against the "dope pushing racketeers".

Sweethearts #122 gives us *"I Was A Musician's Girl"*, which appears to be more concerned with dangers of being seduced by the new "gone" sound that goes beyond be-bop, known as "boiler-plate-rhythm", than with the evils of marijuana itself. Jazz devotee and pianist Louise tries hard to "get with it", but can't seem to feel the rhythm of Drummer Desmond's Hot Cats when they play at the local cellar club. Ted, the band's arranger, contemptuously explains that the crowd is "full of pod" and that they would swing to the blast of a riveting machine. Despite Ted's warnings that marijuana is poison, Louise is intrigued. Joining Drummer's band to jam at an after hours spot, she is told. "Doll-baby, you've got to get with the pod first! Here, this'll make a hep cat out of you." Soon she is "riding that golden chord", and impresses Drummer enough that he invites her to join the band. Quickly, "life became a merry-go-round of reefers and so-called rhythm, smoky dives and swaying cats", but mornings are filled with splitting headaches and stomach pains. Eventually it all catches up with Louise and she gets so sick that with Ted's help she seeks a cure at his folk's farm. He falls for her and invites her to come hear his band play "real blues, clear and sweet and pure", but she begins to feel he is becoming possessive, and runs to the club where Drummer is playing, the "memory of the stinging sweet sensation" of a marijuana high quickening her blood. Fortunately, no sooner is she in the door than she realizes her mistake. "This is bedlam", she thinks and hurries back to Ted's waiting arms.

Realistic Romances #16 (June-July 1954) reprints *"My Scandalous Affair!"*, from **Romantic Love #6**, illustrated by Everett Raymond Kinstler. In it we meet self-described "wild teen-ager" Claire, who enjoys the attention of all the boys at school. The source of her appeal is alluded to in a panel of her riding on the running board of a speeding jalopy accompanied by the following text: "My sophomore year in high school was a helter-skelter one, I was more daring than any of the girls, and about as wild as a boy. It was my formula for popularity", followed by a panel of her surrounded by eager suitors and the additional text. "By the time I had become a senior, I kept popular with the boys through methods entirely different."

Angered by the insinuation of her childhood sweetheart, Dick Lauder, that she is, shall we say, "easy", Claire heads out on the town with the disreputable Neil, who resembles Archie Andrews gone to seed. After a near-fatal accident she is read the riot act by her step-father (her mother having passed away when she was younger). Even an ill-fated attempt to patch things up by Dick doesn't pre-

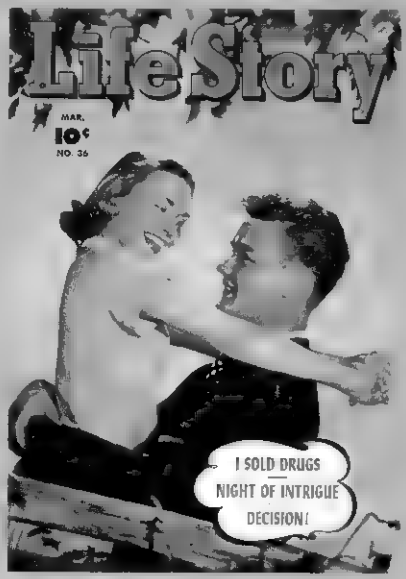
vent her from seeking out Neil's company, and before long Claire is lighting up a reefer at a party. Feeling ill from the experience, and frightened by Neil's crazy behavior when she tries to leave, she calls the faithful Dick to come drive her home. Alas, Claire's wild side wins out again, and it's all reefer romance until her step-father ends up socking Neil in the jaw and dragging her off in handcuffs to a padded cell in a sanitarium. The tough love continues when she is shown a crazed looking woman only a few years older than herself locked in a cell. The woman went much further than Claire and now it is too late, the doctor explains. After she is cured, Claire finds that Dick is still waiting for her, and finally she realizes where her heart belongs.

I highly recommend **Realistic Romances #16** to any pre-code crime fan, not only for the marijuana story, but also for *Thrill Crazy*, the tale of teen-aged Sally Winters, a red headed hell-cat whose quest for a good time leads to a thrill crazy crime spree with a wild boyfriend, ending in gunplay and a long prison stretch the young Miss Winters. Also contained in the book is *"The Shame is Mine"* the story of sexy cigarette girl Doris Kenton, who gets mixed up with a wrong guy and his counterfeit perfume racket. Once again the tale ends in jail time, with no spurned yet forgiving old boyfriend in sight.

"Dread Past" in **All True Romance #14** (Nov 1953) gets down to business quickly. Within three pages Nurse Alice Cagen has related the story of her former drug addiction, stealing morphine from the hospital to supply her boyfriend Jack, who has introduced her to marijuana and inevitably harder stuff, as well as her subsequent arrest and year long stint in the house of correction. This is all set-up for the meat of the story. It seems after serving her time Alice moved to a distant town and hid her past, falling in love with a doctor. Unexpectedly her drug-dealing ex-boyfriend ends up the hospital, critically injured during a shoot-out with the police. He recognizes her while on the operating table, and she fears he will reveal her sordid past. Acting as anesthesiologist, she almost succumbs to the opportunity to kill her ex by administering an overdose of sleeping gas, but before she can remove the hose, he is dead. Wracked by guilt she confesses to her doctor boyfriend. He informs her that it was excessive internal bleeding that killed Jack, and not the gas. Happily he is unfazed by her dark history and the story ends with a kiss.

Also of note in this issue is *"Gang Moll"*, a well illustrated but odd story in which a woman allows her self to become the sex toy of a known hoodlum, all so that she can set him up for the cops, including her unwitting plainclothes boyfriend. She manages to get herself shot in the process, but the cop boyfriend easily forgives all this questionable behavior and marries her at the end. The final panel implies that much of their subsequent love life involves him checking out the bullet scar near her heart.

Teen-Age Temptations #8 (June 1954) is highly sought after for the cover alone. Superbly illustrated by Matt Baker, it features a leggy red head in a torn blouse, sprawled on the floor of a tawdry flat, a t-shirt clad thug twisting her right arm as he addresses a well-dressed fellow at the door, "You keep out of this Fenton! I'm not losing the time and dough I invested in this chick!" While the cover scene could be interpreted as prelude to a rape, the actual story, also illustrated by Baker, shows it to be actually more compli



MY SCANDALOUS AFFAIR!
PERHAPS YOU'VE HEARD ABOUT GIRLS LIKE ME--JUST TEEN AGED KIDS WHO DARE TO DO THINGS THAT NO NICE GIRLS DO! DON'T TURN YOUR FACE AWAY IN SCORN WHEN YOU COME UPON THEM! THEY MAY NEED YOUR HELP!
COME ON, CLARE! DON'T BE A WET BLANKET! JUST TRY ONE AND YOU'LL NEVER BE WITHOUT 'EM!
WE'LL TELL YOU SEE WHAT THEY DO FOR YOU, CLAIRE!
WELL, HERE GOES!
MY SOPHOMORE YEAR IN HIGH SCHOOL WAS A HELTER SKELTER ONE! I WAS MORE DARING THAN ANY OF THE GIRLS, AND ABOUT AS WILD AS A BOY! IT WAS MY FORMULA FOR POPULARITY!
WHEEEEEEEE! STEP ON IT! TAKE THE NEXT CORNER WIDE OPEN!

The images used in this article come from "The Monkey on Her Back" Youthful Hearts #1 on page 9. Page 10 sees "I Was as Musician's Girl" from Sweethearts 122 and panels and the splash from Youthful Hearts #1. On this page the ever so innocent cover to Life Story #36 and another amazing splash from E.R. Kinstler for Avon's Realistic Romances #16. Over the page images from Sweethearts #122 and Youthful Hearts #1.

SWEETHEARTS
I BEGIN ON THE KEEPER AND HELD TIGHT. WHILE THE SNOW SCRATCHED MY LUNGS LIKE TINY SCAMPERING FEET THEN I FELT THE SHIVERS AND THE STRIDENT CHORDS FROM THE BAND SUDDENLY BECAME LIKE THE GOLDEN TONES FROM A SWING BAND!
ARE YOU GONE COOL? ARE YOU RIDING THE GOLDEN CHORD?
I WANT TO SIT DOWN AT THIS PIANO. I FEEL LIKE I WANT TO PLAY THE NIGHT AWAY
MMMMM... I FEEL LIKE A MILLION!
YO... A BEARD MUST SHE SAID. OKEMO VACATE THAT PIANO THE LADY WANTS TO PLAY
IT SEEMED LIKE ALL THE MUSIC IN THE WORLD WAS RUSHING IN MY FINGERTIPS THAT NIGHT! AND THE MORE I GAVE AWAY THE MORE THERE WAS LEFT TO PLAY.
GIVE IT OUT, DOLL! GIVE IT OUT, MAN. LISTEN TO THAT, WILL YA? PLAY!
I ALWAYS KNEW SHE HAD THE MADNESS OF ART
DOLL, THE BAND NEEDS A NEW PIANO PLAYER AND YOU'RE RIGHT FOR THE JOB. WHAT D'YOE SAY?
COUNT ME ON THE PAYROLL, DRUMMER... I'M WITH YOE.

HE ASSURED ME IT WASN'T, MARY. BUT, IT DIDN'T MATTER ANYWAY. ONCE I HAD THE TASTE, THE NEED, THE THRILLS. I COULDN'T STOP--I HAD TO GO ON AND ON...TO TRY SOMETHING STRONGER....
GOOD OLD SPEED-BALL, MARIJUANA'S FOR KIDS--THIS STUFF'S FOR THE --BIG PEOPLE...
I...I'M AFRAID. ARE YOU SURE...?
IT'S OK, YOU'LL LOVE IT, I KNOW... IT'S CANDY... IT'S A TECHNI-COLOR DREAM...

A DREAM SHE SAID--AND, A DREAM IT WAS. ONLY IT TURNED INTO A NIGHTMARE OF DESIRE FOR MORE AND MORE, THAT EATS AWAY WITHIN ME LIKE THOUSANDS OF HUNGRY ANTS....
AND SO--PLEASE TRY TO UNDER-STAND ME, MARY---I BEGGED--I STOLE --I--I EVEN....
STOP--NO MORE--I CAN'T STAND ANYMORE. OH, MY POOR DARLING! WHAT CAN YOU DO? WHAT CAN WE DO?

cated and less lurid than that. The story contains no marijuana smoking, and there is no mention of the drug by any name in any of the stories in the book. There are however, two stories containing one panel each in which it can be inferred that a joint is being smoked based on the dialogue. These are meant to illustrate the wild crowd the girls are hanging with, rather than as introductions to the evils of reefer. They can't really be counted as marijuana or drug stories, but various tales of good girls gone bad, illustrated by Matt Baker, are a satisfactory substitute.

Another story in which marijuana only plays a passing roll is *"Twice Jilted"* in **True Love Confessions #1** (May 1954). Carol's kid sister Ann, borrows her distinctive cashmere coat for a night on the town with playboy Tony Archer. Tony smokes some marijuana, drives too fast and is fatally injured in a car crash from which Ann flees, unhurt. This is relevant to the story only in that she is witnessed running from the accident, her coat described. This leads to a drawn out drama in which Carol's boyfriend Andy suspects it was her in the car, and Carol nearly marries someone else before they reconcile.

I Sold Drugs" is listed as the lead story on the cover of **Life Story #36** (March 1952), beneath an insipid photo of an embracing young couple. While not a marijuana tale it does include scenes of morphine addiction and drug dealing. Nurse Bess falls for Stan, a smooth talking patient in need of some pain management assistance, much to the consternation of commissary worker Artie, who pines for her. Once released Stan quickly finds himself addicted to morphine, and convinces Bess to steal it from the infirmary. One thing leads to another and soon she is rolling in dough, supplying a narcotics ring with the pilfered dope, but it all comes crashing down when she finds out that Stan has got her kid sister hooked. Taken to the hospital, sis nearly dies, slicing her wrist in an attempt to steal more drugs from a glass case. Overwhelmed by guilt, Bess confesses to Artie, but in this story there are no forgiving arms to run to, and Bess turns herself in to the law, ready to name names and face her fate.

The dangerous and criminal activities that are an inevitable part of reefer romance make for generally more entertaining reading than is offered by much of the romance genre. Admittedly there are occasionally other gems buried within the sentimental pages of "love" comics, but sadly, as with the marijuana stories, they are few and far between.

Small Press

Scared to Death 3 £1 00 2004
Robyn Talbot, Flat 3, 178 Tulketh Road, Ashton, Preston, PR2 1ER

A blast from the recent past gets this issue's column underway. If you enjoy your horror and offbeat movies, look no further than Robyn's highly entertaining **Scared to Death** He really does have a passion for these films, going as far back as the silent movies of the early twentieth century and then stretching out across the entire globe, with an ability to inter-relate quite obscure entries rarely seen on the silver screen Your pound gets you thirty-two black and white A5 pages of sheer unadulterated enthusiasm There's the obligatory sense of humour and thank God honesty, not all of these films can be described masterpieces, far from it. I know there's a few more films I am going to have to track down after reading this and the preceding couple of issues

The Last Coiner 2006 £5.00 plus £1 00 postage. Duchy Parade Films Ltd , 20 Glebe Road, Harrogate, North Yorkshire, HG2 0LZ

Peter M Kershaw and Vince Danks have teamed together to produce the kind of opulent publication of which we all dream. This forty-eight page art novel, it is far from being a comic book - more of a visual experience, is the prelude to a forthcoming film set in the West Riding of the eighteenth century Funding has come from the Arts Council, the Borough of Scarborough, the City of York Council and Calderdale Council – Calderdale also sponsor a wonderful old cinema in the centre of Hebden Bridge – none of your corporate multiplexes for these good people! **The Last Coiner** is a splendidly conceived experience, with a ne'er a dull moment telling a tale of hard times in Halifax and the offence of clipping coins, a little like trimming comic books and selling them as mint copies Scandalous I know! Working with Peter's script Vince works wonders to capture the atmosphere and bring life to these characters of more than two centuries past. Thankfully much of the antiquity of this area is still intact, making it perfect for a project of this ilk

For anyone with a love of Photoshop this will have you frothing at the mouth. It is also provides a very interesting history lesson for its price of entry. While I know of these parts and a little of their past, there was much to be gleaned from these pages. I have to confess to skulduggery in my own family, one of my ancestors was involved in the practice of clipping the King's coinage and while they could never apprehend him for this he was later hung for murder They were cruel times and part of my excuse for the running of such a grisly publication. **The Last Coiner** is far more than a comic book and will attract the interest of many devotees of film and local history, so snap it up while you still can.

Horrormood 1 2007 £3.50
John Simpson, 1/1 5 Harland Cottages, Scotstoun, Glasgow, G14 0AS

Continuing the story of The Heap from John Gallagher's Bedlam this is a must for long time fans as well as newcomers to the Skywald Horrormood. There are forty-four pages of The Heap's on-going series contained in this issue, with an appearance from Vincent Price as the ever abominable Dr. Anton Phibes Messrs Gallagher and Simpson take this much maligned character to new heights blending pathos with a typically dark comedic narrative. For those of you have lamented the none appearance of **Bedlam** and **Usher** over the last couple of years, this issue will prove a worthy surrogate. It is also an excellent chance to become re-acquainted with the Skywald phenomenon of three decades past These chaps have a firm grasp of Alan Hewetson's

experimental vis on and are now taking it that one step further

The Erotic Adventures of Space Babe 113 2006 £2.25 $3.50
John Mayberry c/o Soaring Penguin Ltd , 4 Kingston Vale, London, SW15 3RU email spacebabe113@soaringpenguin.co.uk

This guy is e ther completely nuts or as equally likely an utter genius, I haven't quite made my mind up as yet For the enthusiasts among you of those more obscure brands of science fiction and fantasy this is a must. Several years ago John set out to see just how abstract he could make a cute and dare I say sexy female character This is the result, how best to describe it, minimalist but uniquely compelling

These twenty-four pages of story feature page upon page of a remarkably tight, twelve panels per page, story-te l-ing format. It is highly experimental in its approach, putting me in mind of some of the underground material from the atter part of the 1970s and early years of the 80s and some of the work publ shed by Fantagraphics and Slave Labour. Whe e being definitely out there, somewhere, it is far from inaccess b e. The artwork holds your eye throughout, and you can't but help admire John's ingenu ty in recounting this often h. arious tale

Spaceship Away... Part 11 Spring 2007 £6.99 (UK) £9 00 (Overseas)
Rod Barzilay, 8 Marley Close, Preston, Weymouth, Dorset, DT3 6DH

Spaceship Away... may well look incredibly modern, luxuriating in its state of the art production techniques, but it evokes so much of the opulence that was commonp ace in the comic books of the 1950s and 60s. Read ng these pages, particularly Char.es Chilton and Tacco-ni's *"Journey into Space: Planet of Fear"* I felt myself whisked back in time to the UK comics of my youth, years after the halcyon days of **The Eagle**. In al ow ng less than half a dozen pages to each story there is a wonderful sense of nostalg a in discovering once again the kinds of exc ting story we grew up on. American comics in the 1960s were at a prem um, even with the ever- improving d stribut on of the decade, so comics of this kind such as **The Eagle** and **TV21** were our best source of i ustrated adventure And what a way to beg n reading comics!

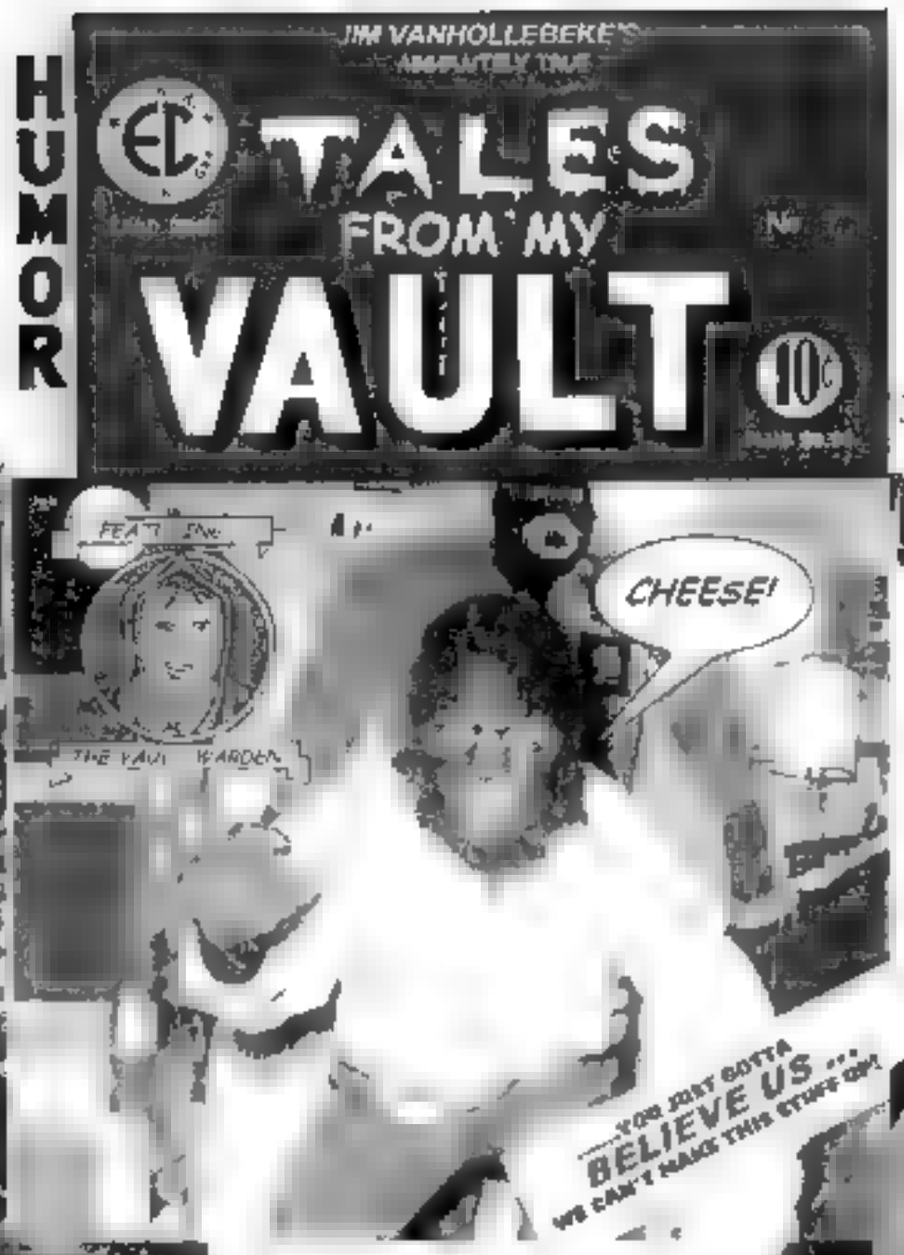
Th s tit e in its short lifetime has set the standard, but it is not a publication that has resorted to hiding behind lavish shows of presentation. Okay I may not be able to get enough of its stunning use of colour, but the narration with n holds me on the very edge of my seat. The Dan Dare adventures don't just capture the essence of what has gone before, they continue an esteemed trad tion in the safest hands possible. I look forward with expectation to the next issue and welcome a new co ective of readers over in the United States where **Spaceship Away...** is now bound.

Dark Tales 9 Autumn 2006 £3 50
7 Offley Street, Barbourne, Worcester, WR3 8BH www darkta es co.uk

If any of you out there fancy a shot at pouring yourself into a spell of writing dark prose, take a look at this magazine. **Dark Tales** throws down the gaunt et, invit-ing potential writers of the future to script a tale in no more than three and a ha f thousand words. It's not quite as easy as it sounds, but these fifty-six A5 pages bring together twelve fledgling ta ents who without exception demonstrate a rare capacity in be-ing able to narrate an account to put a ch l along your spine. I found myself engrossed in these contents; read his one sodden Friday n ght when I shou d have turned in at a good hour. My intention was to read the first few pages, but I was unab e to put it down; a familiar tale I am no doubt sure. After having g eefully digested these skilled narratives I can assure you there isn't a single offering which failed to ho d my interest The layouts while simple work to great effect allowing you to become absorbed by the dark deeds within Linda Bucklin's artwork also deserves a men-tion, surely we will be seeing much more of her in the not too distant future

Comics Forum presents The Comic Crea-tors Guild Annual £6.95 2006 $12 95 E9 95
Soaring Penguin Ltd., 4 Kingston Vale, Lon-don, SW15 3RU

Edited by the already mentioned John May-bury with more than an assist from S obhan Hi lman this 120 page tome draws together the diverse work of the creators who make up the Comic Creators Gu d based in the UK. Behind James Fletcher's eye-catching cover, which would have worked just as wel fronting anything from the domain of science fiction published in the last fifty years, there is an abundance of talent exh bited in these pages. Horror fans w l want to check out *"The Origin of the Species"* written by Andy Dickenson with the accompanying pencils of Sarah Evans, her layouts and design look so impressive.



There are a couple of entries from John Mayberry himself, which are especially compelling. Within you will find well researched advice on putting together your own comics, from the point of inspiration to getting them into appreciative hands. This annual is an invaluable resource both in terms of creative input and the information it offers to would be artists, publishers and writers As would be expected from John Anderson's Soaring Penguin, it is a beautifully packaged affair, finished in a square bound format. It will prove one those essential sources of reference to which you will find yourself returning on a regular basis

Students of the Unusual Giant Sized Extra Credit Special 1 $2.95 2006. 3 Boys Publications, 1399 S. Harbor City Blvd., Melbourne, Florida, 32901, United States

Terry Cronin has finally managed to get his eclectic collection of strange tales distributed by Diamond. This will hopefully improve your chances of tracking down this intriguing publication. In its own way it is again experimental in style, refusing to blindly adhere to anything that has gone before. The contents within are accepting of those great traditions of comic book past yet reveal a determination to offer something entirely of this team's own making.

Every page is printed in colour, laid out over a sumptuous gloss. I have to confess to once again being green with envy "*King of the Road*" scripted by Terry fascinates, it takes you one way then the next, uncovering Florida's rich history and then exposes a sentient skin cancer Julia Lichty's art stry continues to excite, she has talent and is his time coupled with a triumvirate of scriptwriters. "*Strangler*" by Howard Hopkins and Joel Rivers will be of interest to many long-term horror buffs, the ambience compliments a tale, which may been told before, but is given a momentary thought provoking change of pace. This issue also comes with a DVD collecting some of the stories previously seen in **Students of the Unusual**. The disc on its own is well worth the price of admission. I was stunned by the quality of the work on show; I think we have more than one or two filmmakers of the future here

Tales from my Vault 7 January 2007 $6.00 Jim VanHollebeke, 19637 Poinciana, Redford, MI 48240, United States

As early as the 6th grade the kids were putting it around that young Jimmy was crazy, they were right! Jim's life has been an extraordinary history of ill-timing and amidst some of the most disgraceful situations you could ever imagine, the contents of this and the preceding six issues are akin to a comedy of errors. Most of us will understandably try to forget the more embarrassing moments from our past, not Jim. Part of his therapy has been to get it all out in the open and give us all a good laugh, all at his own expense. While **Tales from my Vault** is a highly amusing read there is a poignancy to his narrative, he certainly makes you think and takes you back to times in your own life

Fans of **Mad** will love this title and it lives up to an EC horror comic with an appearance by Father Jack from Ireland's own Father Ted, one of the finest, if not the finest sitcom in more than twenty years. The "*Astounding Facts*" piece opened my eyes and along with Jim's witty comments had me in stitches If yours is the need for a good read or you just need cheering up, this comes whole-heartedly recommended, and check out the Wolf Man makeup from 1962!

Simian Scrolls 13 £3 00 $6 00 Winter 2007 John Roche, Mediation House, 74 Stockwell Road, Pembroke Dock, Pembrokeshire, Wales, SA72 6TQ

Is there to be any stopping this monkey madness?! I do hope not. **Simian Scrolls** just goes on from strength to strength. Surely there can't be many enthusiasts of the Planet of the Apes prodigy who haven't laid eyes on this essential magazine. Editors, Dave Ballard, Dean Preston, Alan Maxwell and John Roche have once again compiled a set of highly informative and as ever entertaining articles

Just when you thought you had everything Ape you could ever want, Brokensea Audio have released their tribute to the 1968 movie with additional scenes and original sound design. **Simian Scrolls** endeavours to uncover the entire story behind this new release. Dean Preston gets to interview Mort Abrahams, one of the producer to the first two Apes' films as well as Buck Kartalian, who played one of the apes from the first film and has also enjoyed a long career in television and motion pictures and finally Wright King better known to us as Dr. Galen. This is not just a magazine for Apes' fans, it has an appeal for anyone with an interest in the medium of television and film fantasy

THE CO

STORIES TO HOLD YOU SPELLBOUND

LOVE STORY

MONTHLY

TERROR TH

THE DEATH WISH

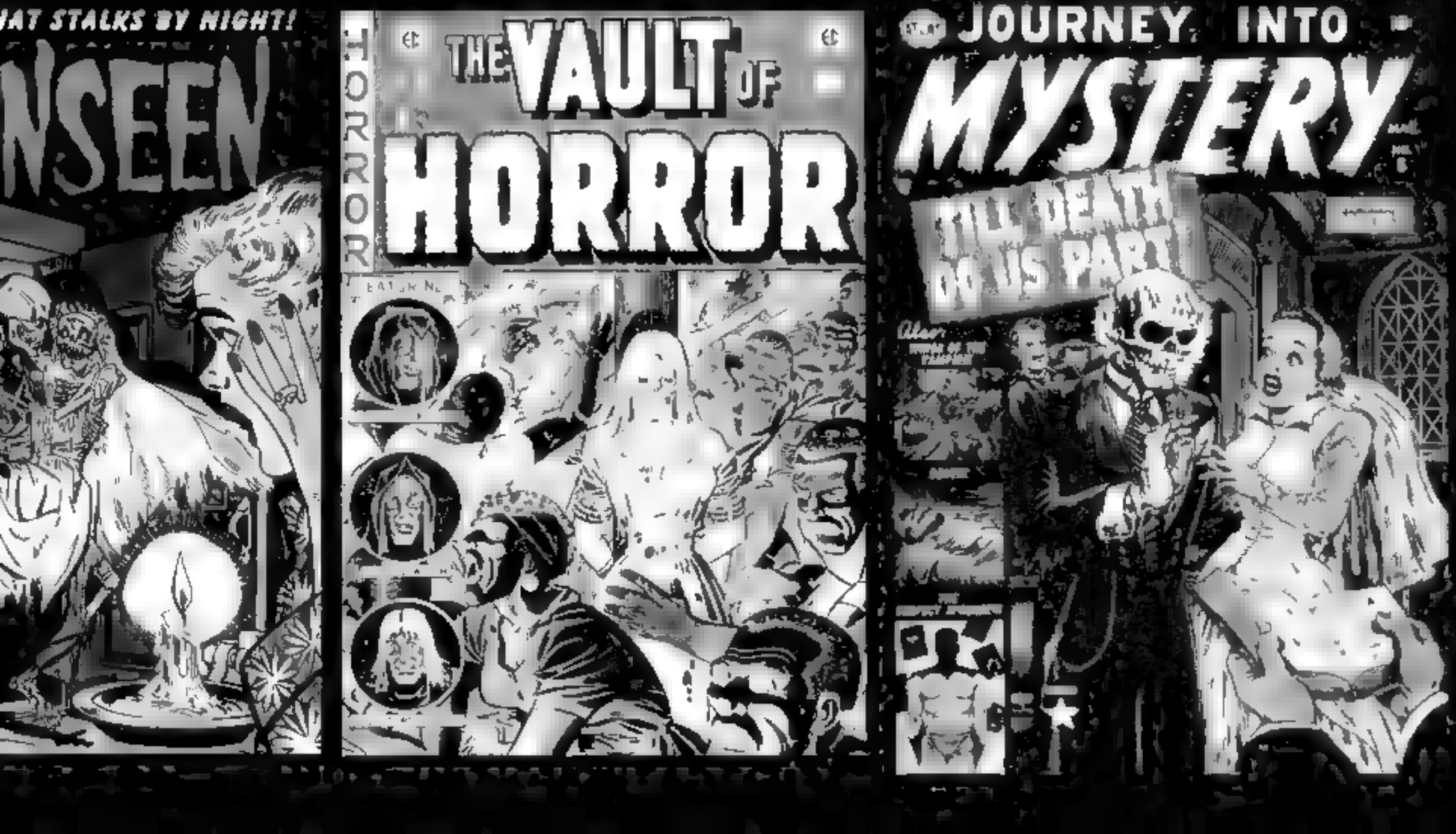
ORPSE BRIDE

by Peter "dead again" Normanton

You can hear the swish of white satin as she glides along the aisle and the gasps of those seduced in the train of her elegant sway. The organ announces her arrival. Yes she's a picture, but not the picture you had for so long dreamed, for she is the similitude of sheer terror insisting your throw back the veil and lay a kiss on those putrescent lips. Maybe it was too many Alice Cooper albums later compounded by Tim Burton's "Corpse Bride" but it was impossible to resist burrowing into those old horror comics in search of a wedding album of decomposing brides from half a century past. It seemed so obvious but strangely enough there weren't many rotting cadavers to be found decomposing their way up the aisle, yet an abundance of unsettling fare was still to be had which just had to find a place in these pages.

Typically it was EC with Vault of Horror 28 (December 1952), whose cover captured the iconic bridal cadaver as the prelude to "*Till Death*". This once fair maiden had only just made it to the church on time before jungle fever brought her young life to an end. With Johnny Craig at the helm it never became the grisly spectre more commonly associated with EC's penchant for terror, rather it was a taut narration of the perils of resurrecting love from the confines of the grave.

Standard's Adventures into Darkness 7 (December 1952) followed a similarly tragic path in the aptly entitled "*Bride of Death*", beautifully detailed by one of the company's regulars Jack Katz. While a herbal potion was able to revive the recently deceased Dolores Martiz, a lady of incomparable beauty, there followed a sequence of events with inevitable catastrophe lying in wait. When you set about returning the dead from their eternal slumber, you can discard any hope of a joyous finale; remember Herbert West. It was the alarming decline in her grief stricken husband on which this story chose to set its focus. If he had been in control of his faculties he would have left her for dead when she died a second time, but Joseph was unable to resist her captivating charm. His ever failing sense of reason gave Jack Katz the opportunity to toy with his derangement leaving Delores as beauteous as she had been when she walked our world. That same month the corpse bride was very much in evidence in "*The Witching Hours*" from Strange Tales 13 as Tony Marden attempted to save his bride to be from a skeletal witch. There was a discernible tension at work in these pages, but dreaded mother in law gags will never be the same again. Atlas tales of this kind have caused pre-Code horror fans much frustration over the years, the components to make for a first rate tale of terror were all cleverly put into place, but the onus too often seemed



Journey into Unknown Worlds 32 (December 1954) wasn't to have a corpse bride make her wedding vows, but the evil Eva Brun was to consent to "*The Monstrous Marriage*" in her native Black Forest and thus seal her fate. Obsessed by her craving for gold she failed to see the underlying nature of her husband and the villainous heart of her lover. She may not have married as one of the dead, but if she were ever to return only Ghastly Graham Ingels could have ever done her justice.

I couldn't resist using the Bill Everett's darkly comic cover to Journey into Mystery 6 (Mar 1953) announcing "*Till Death Do Us Part*"! Mort Lawrence was to provide five characteristically brooding pages of artwork for this sinister tale of matrimonial discord with not a corpse bride in sight. That doesn't mean there's no room for a corpse in this piece. Someone should put together a collection of Mort's work

to be on a thinly disguised joke at the denoue-ment.

A few years later the fledgling Steve Ditko produced a splash panel for This Magazine is Haunted 18's (July 1954) "*Bridegroom Came Back*", which remains a classic of its kind and embraces the very essence of this piece. In terms of simple story telling technique it was a cut above much of Charlton's fod-der from these years, in that the narration came from the wedding gown in a style very reminiscent of Stan Lee. It was obvious to all the bridegroom was a cad and a bounder, but the gown had plans to rectify the situation in a gruesome tale, which only ever intimated the blood and guts at hand. Dry cleaning for our poor wedding dress could have been an expensive option!

Prior to ever getting the ghoul of your dreams before the altar you would of course have to arrange a "*Date with a Corpse*" as described in the pages of The Unseen 15 (July 1954). Set in a Sicily where the dialogue at times appeared unusually Hispanic in origin; this was the tale of a love scorned and revenge from beyond the veil of death. There was a suggestion of necrophilia as rigor mortis set in, but then that kind of thing was a way of life in these comics, al-though it wasn't quite as obvious as Haunt of Fear 28's "*The Prude*" from later that same year.

Was it a play upon names or was this tale alluding to some-thing from the darkness of the world's all too recent past?

from these years, he is another of those unrecognised geniuses. Bill was again enjoying himself on the cover of Spellbound 14 (April 1953). The macabre date in this scene may not have made her wedding plans as yet, but you can be rest assured she's going to do everything in her power to make sure she soon does. "*Love Story*" revealed what comes after the fateful wedding day, when the confetti and well-wishers became just a distant memory. Joe Maneely never looked any better in a tale of anger and treacherous deceit deep in the jungles of Kenya. In that same issue marital bliss eluded Wilbur Bixby in a story which

distorted and merged ideas found in the "*The Monstrous Marriage*" and "*Till Death Do Us Part*". Come on this was comic books pre-Code style!

If you managed to survive all of this trouble and strife Chamber of Chills 19 (September 1953) was able to provide a "*Happy Anniversary*", introduced by a remarkable splash page from Bob Powell, which surely epitomised the corpse bride. As the tale unfurled an element of the content tale may have been a little too close for comfort for many of its older readers; this, the unfortunate truth lying behind a tenth wedding anniversary. Talk about a marriage made in hell! The graphic finale depicting the decaying corpse might not have been the corpse bride we have been in search, but for anyone who comes to discover it, it continues to be an image intrinsic to this dark-age of comic book story telling.

On the previous page running from left to right we have Spellbound #14, The Unseen #13, Vault of Horror #26 and Journey into Mystery #6. The interior panel art on this spread comes from Jack Katz on Standard's Adventures into Darkness #7, The Unseen #15, Steve Ditko's splash from This Magazine is Haunted #18, the final page to Strange Tales #13's "The Witching Hours" and to the right the opening and the closing pages to Bob Powell's rendition of "Happy Anniversary" from Harvey's Chamber of Chills #19.

THIS IS THE SEASON OF MERRIMENT OF MARRIAGE. OF MIRTH AND IN LINE WITH THE TIME OF THE YEAR WE OF CHAMBER OF CHILLS HAVE OUR OWN SPECIAL WAY OF WISHING YOU A
HAPPY ANNIVERSARY
THE LONG SUMMER DAY IS ENDING THE SOFT CURTAIN OF TWILIGHT FALLS OVER THE CITY AND IN A LITTLE HOUSE CHARLOTTE HUMS HAPPILY AS SHE GETS READY FOR THE GREAT EVENT...
BE PATIENT DEAR I'LL JOIN YOU AS SOON AS THE CHAMPAGNE IS CHILLED THEN WE'LL START OUR ANNIVERSARY PARTY WITH THE USUAL TOAST TO ANOTHER YEAR OF HAPPINESS!
OUR TENTH! IT'S HARD TO REALIZE WE'VE BEEN TOGETHER IN THIS HOUSE FOR TEN LONG YEARS HOW TIME FLIES WHEN ONE IS HAPPY!

HAUNTED
me Back!
E FIRST SEES ME HER EYES ARE SHINING AND ADIANT WITH LOVE
D TREMBLES AS SHE REACHES FORWARD AND STROKES ME TENDERLY.
ES SELLE ?
OH!

I KNEW THERE WOULD BE MORE BETTY MERRIWEATHERS I KNEW YOU WOULDN'T LOSE YOUR DEPRAVED TASTE FOR FLESHY WOMEN THAT'S WHY THE NIGHT WE WERE MARRIED
BUT THAT'S ENOUGH OF THE UNHAPPY SORDID PAST TONIGHT IS OUR NIGHT TO BE GAY AND HAPPY AND WARM TO BEING TO THE LONG AND BRIGHT FUTURE THAT LIES BEFORE US
TO THE FUTURE DARLING TO THE MANY MANY MORE HAPPY YEARS TOGETHER JUST THE TWO OF US

THE ERIC POWELL INTERVIEW

From the Tomb has a heavy interest in pre-Code horror comics, have any of these influenced you in your own work in comics?

The EC horror and sci-fi comics are a huge influence on my work. The work of Wally Wood and Jack Davis especially

As a kid was a career as an artist something you thought about it?

Yeah, that was pretty much what I wanted to do from the beginning. I really started following comics in junior high. But I always knew I wanted to have some kind of art career

What kind of training did you have?

No formal training other than art classes in high school

Prior to the appearance of The Goon what kind of work where you involved in?

I did some inking for Marvel. A few illustration jobs for Dark Horse and smaller publishers. I did a lot of odd jobs. Painting motorcycle helmets and selling paintings. Anything to try to make a buck doing some kind of art

Do you find it tough keeping a roof over your head with a hit comicbook?

No, it's hard to keep a roof over your head without a hit comic. Being a free-lancer living from job to job is really hard. Having your own comic click and become successful is the luckiest thing that's ever happened to me

You have described The Goon as evolving from junior high school days, looking at him and his world now I can see traces of Jack Kirby and Will Eisner, would you say this was fair? And who else has influenced your work?

Kirby and Eisner definitely. And as I said before Wood and Davis are big, too. I love all the pulpy guys.

The series has deservedly acquired a dedicated following who seem entirely at home with this strangely bizarre yet almost believable world, could you tell us anything about the creative process that goes to preparing each issue,the characters and the atmospheric streets in which they live?

Atmosphere is an important thing to me. I always saw the Goon's town as being a Universal Monsters village that people attempted to modernize. Weird tubes and wires coming out of old creepy stone buildings. All the characters

and story lines usually spring from very simple ideas. They get fleshed out in the script stage

Would it have been feasible to make a success of The Goon with your own Albatross Exploding Funny Books imprint?

I believe it would have. It was on it's way. That's why Dark Horse was willing to pick it up But Dark Horse definitely helps get it to a larger audience

Why did The Goon move from Avatar, they seem to have a good pedigree?

I wasn't happy with the production quality The book apparently wasn't doing well enough for them to increase the quality so I went on to do other work.

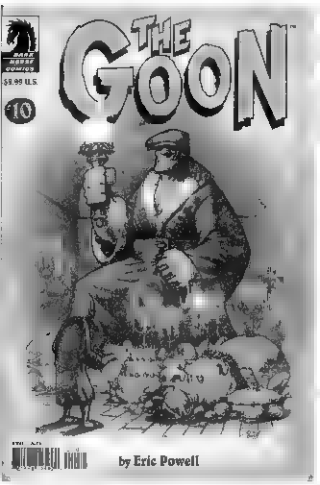
Is The Goon to be a long term project or will see the series come to an end in a similar way to Cerebus, Bone and Strangers in Paradise?

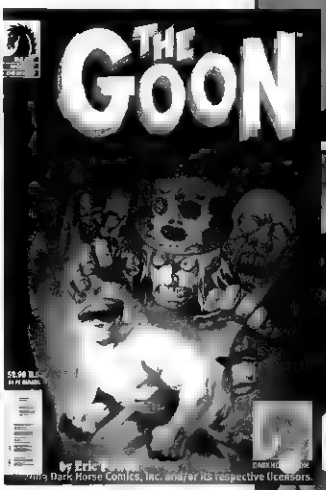
The big story lines do have an end and I will go on to do other projects but I think I'll be coming back to the Goon all of my life.

You are an admirer of Kyle Hotz who you eventually got to work with, who else would you like to collaborate with and what are the possibilities of this ever happening?

Well, I did get to work with Mike Mignola a little. That was a great experience. I'd love to work with Alan Moore but I don't think that will happen since he is cutting back on comic work

That would be quite something. I notice Mike Mignola shared the art chores when Hellboy appeared in issue #7, this must have been a special moment for you. How did this come about?





I'LL TAKE THE EYE FROM THE SOCKET AND LAST I ASIDE I DEMAND MY JUST REWARD FOR SUCH OVATION
SOMETHING IS WRONG WITH MY HAT. SOMETHING IS WRONG WITH MICHAEL
I DEMAND MY REWARD

We were getting a lot of e-mail from fans requesting a crossover. I was against it. I just didn't think it would make much sense. People want to compare the two books for some reason. But I don't get it. They both fight monsters but that's where the similarity ends. So we dropped it. Then Mike came up with this silly way to get them together and we thought why not.

I remember Marvel used these crossovers time and time again in the 70s to increase interest in a new title, did it have the same affect on The Goon?

Yeah, sales doubled. That was great for me. I doubt very much it helped **Hellboy** sales.

You never know. Your fellow creators have been getting the back up slot in The Goon, could you ever see yourself handing the reins over to someone else?

Nope.

Looking at the sketches on The Goon website are we to see an even darker side to your work?

Darker? I dunno. But I do plan on tackling more dramatic work at some point. By dramatic I mean less poop jokes.

Less poop jokes, I don't about that one! Given the amount of work you have to put in to each issue, has the 25 cent promotion been of use. I have to confess this how I discovered your work?

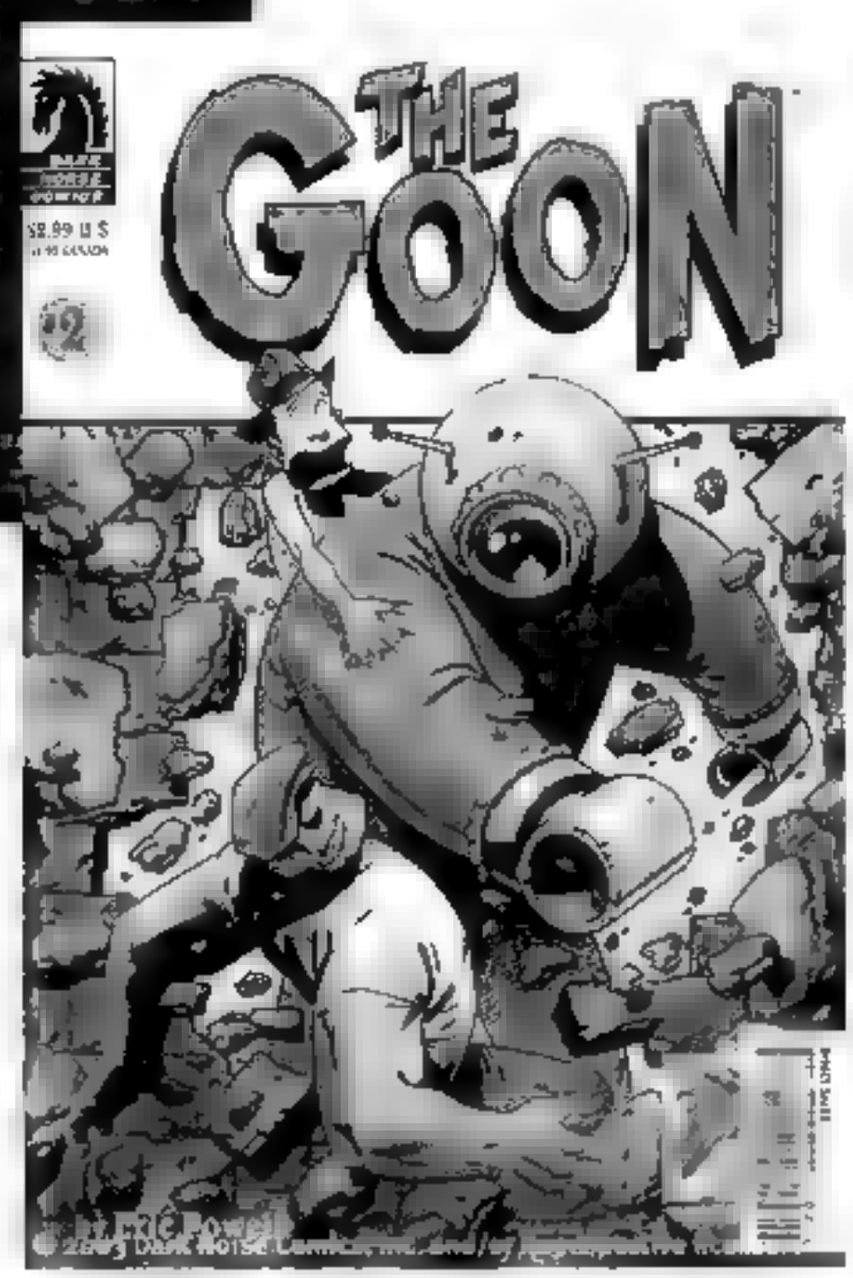
Absolutely. It was a great help reaching new readers.

That's good to hear. Hellboy made the jump to the silver screen in fine style, could you see this being an option for The Goon?

Everything is being optioned these days. Lots of people are sniffing around. We'll see what happens.

I suppose it pays not to get too excited about these things. If it was to happen how much of an influence could you have on the film? I know Alan Moore hasn't always been happy with the way his work has been treated, yet Frank Miller's Sin City had an amazing impact.

Since we haven't made any deals yet, I don't know how much influence I could have. I could ask for total control but that would make a deal less likely. It all



depends on who your working with

You have mentioned in the past a preference for doing painted covers, already we are being treated to some incredible work on Swampthing. To many of fans of this series you seem perfect, but how did this opportunity come about and we will be seeing your brush strokes on any of the Swampthing's interior pages?

I don't really have time to do much interior work with the Goon going on right now I believe editor Casey Seijas brought me to the attention of the Vertigo office

Would there ever be a fully painted Goon strip? The style you chose on the Christmas edition in #10, while not painted was extraordinary, the kind of thing we dreamed of thirty years ago, particularly from the likes of Gene Colan

Possibly Depends on scheduling and timing.

The covers to Marvel's recent Monster Comics really did capture the essence of the original monster comics of the 60s and the reprints I first remember from the early 70s. Who got you on board with this?

Editor Mark Paniccia offered those to me

Was it as much fun as it looks, your Hulk was one to remember?

It was great. Lots of fun drawing the **Hulk** fight **Devil Dinosaur.**

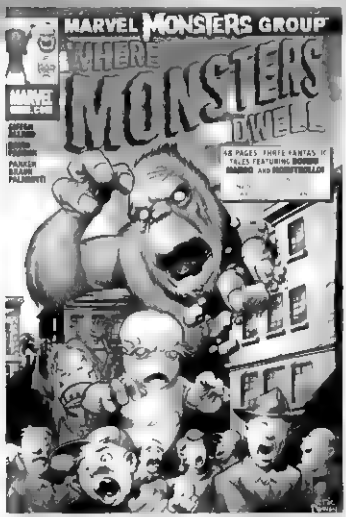
Are there any guidelines when you come to paint the cover for one of either DC or Marvel's characters?

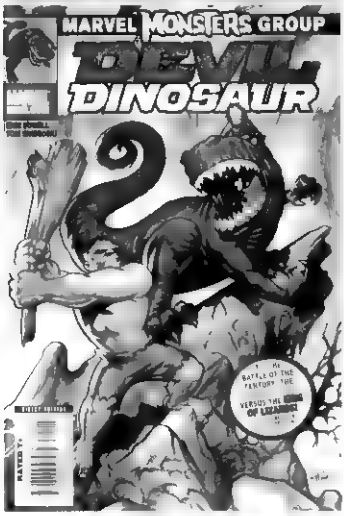
They've been pretty good about letting me run with stuff. Preliminary sketch and then I run with it

Do you approach all of your work with the same enthusiasm, or are there times when it is simply a needs must situation?

Unfortunately deadlines can make you less enthusiastic sometimes.

Can you tell us if music plays a part in your day-to-day life at the drawing board?





Yes, lots Tom Waits is great for drawing the **Goon**

Hmm, yeah that figures. How do you alter your approach when tackling someone else's creation, I am thinking specifically of Conan 28, the Robert E. Howard tribute?

I definitely try to alter style for content. The Marvel Monsters stuff was really Kirby influenced

Are we likely to see you on Conan in the near future?

Maybe a cover

How do you feel about attending the comic conventions ?

I love it. It's the only time I get out of the house.

You are looked upon a as a freelancer, is this out of choice or just the nature of the modern comic book industry?

Both

What are your impressions of the modern comic book industry and its future?

I wish it was a little better but really it's not that bad right now. I think we're heading for a graphic novel driven industry and that's probably a good thing

Each of your Eisner Awards were probably seen as well and truly deserved by many of your fans, being a chap who seems to simply enjoy his craft for what it is, what was your reaction?

Thrilled but feeling a little awkward about being thrilled It was very flattering

Finally what are we likely to see of you in the future?

Lots of **Goon** Maybe some hard core farm animal porn

I am more than sure this would go down well in the pages of From the Tomb. Eric, many thanks for taking time away from your drawing board to do this interview. When I set out to put this together with Eric I didn't realise how many other fans and professionals wanted to do the same thing. Thanks for your patience. I would also like to thank Eric Pigors for making all of this possible, once again you played a blinder.

Images used in this interview: Page 20: Goon #11, 25 cent issue. Page 21: Goon #10, #1 and the gory splash panels from #16. Page 22: Swampthing #22, #26 Goon #2, Swampthing #28. Page 23: Fused #1 Billy the Kid's Old Timey Oddities #4, Monsters on the Prowl. This page Where Monsters Dwell and Devil Dinosaur

THE LATE FICTION HOUSE COMICS

GHOST GALLERY

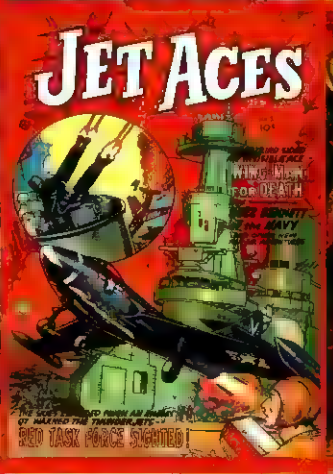
BY FRANK "DOGGER" MOTLER

FIGHTING MEN IN BATTLE ACTION
FIGHT
COMICS
"NOBODY LOVES A MINESWEEPER!"

COW GIRL

JUMBO COMICS
Bigger & Better Funnies
BIG PAGES-BIG PICTURES BIG TYPE EASY TO READ

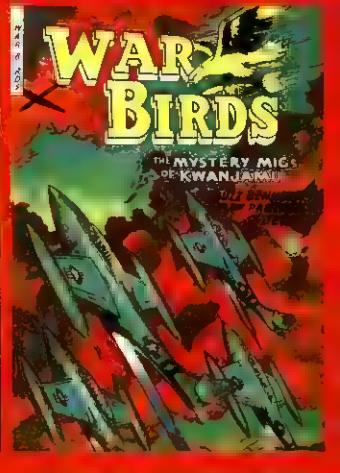
PLANET
COMICS

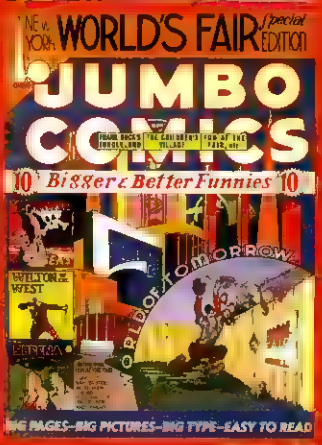

JET ACES
RED TASK FORCE SIGHTED!

JUNGLE
STORIES
KI-GOR
STALKERS OF THE DAWN-WORLD

WINGS
COMICS
CAPTAIN WINGS
BUZZ BENNETT

RANGERS


WAR BIRDS
THE MYSTERY MIGS OF KWANJANU



Easy To Read

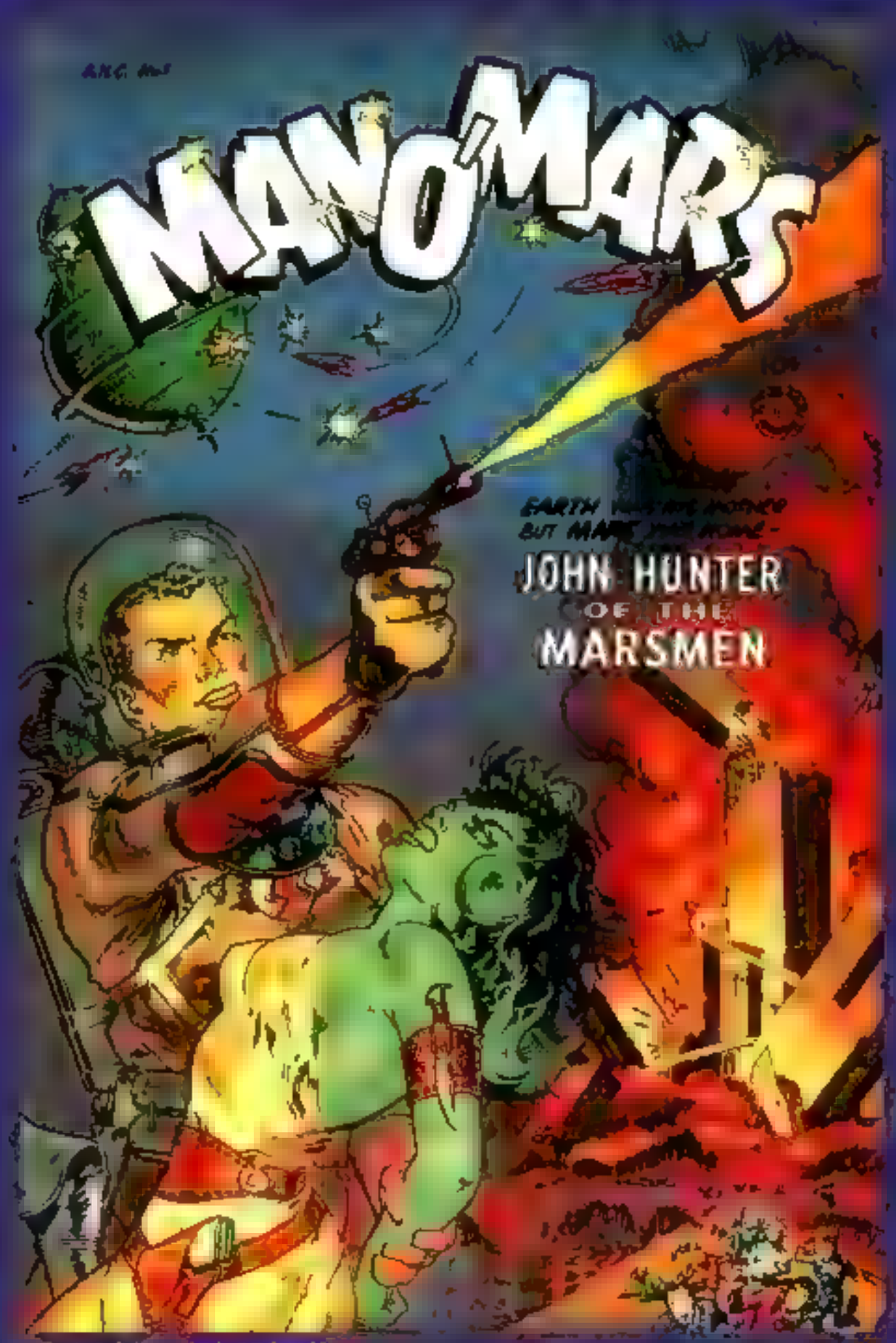
The Big Six

Above Graham Ingels' cover for Planet Stories Vol 2 #6 September 1944 and Ghost #4

Illustrious Career

During the 1940s, the art at *Fiction House* was honed to a new excellence by the hands of such gifted artists as Matt Baker, John Celardo, Jack Kamen, Bob Lubbers and Maurice Whitman. Celardo, Whitman, with Joe Doolin and Dan Zolnerowich illustrated many of the *FH* covers. All were Iger shop artists of the time. These stories were supplemented by those of Murphy Anderson, George Evans, Fran Hoppet, "pre-Ghastly" Graham Ingels, Lilly Renee (Peters) and Nick Viscardi (Cardy), who were freelance or employed by *Fiction House* direct. Ingels also supplied spot illustrations and at least one cover (Planet Stories vol.2#6, spring 1944) for the pulps. Some of *Fiction House*'s most memorable pulp covers were the handiwork of illustrator Allen Anderson (1908-1995). Anderson was a cover specialist who also worked for *St. John*, *Timely* and *Ziff-Davis*. He has been the subject of a retrospective in Daniel Zimmer's excellent magazine, Illustration (#18, winter 2007) and readers are urged to acquire a copy, if they can.

Whilst the 1940s Iger artists are distinguishable, one from the other, for the artists of the 1950s, it is far less clear cut. The great comics historian, Dr Jerry Bails (1933-2006) had this to say: *"While it is easy enough to recognize the art of the second Iger Shop (1940-61) by examining Fiction House comics or Classics Illustrated of the post-war period, it is maddening trying to distinguish the artists from one another."* He concluded, *"One way to tackle this problem is to break down the artists into their specialties or trademarks. If the strip involves ships, then Webb was undoubtedly assigned to it; if women, then either Baker*



Maurice Whitman's cover to Man O' Mars #1, 1953.

Brunner or Maurice Whitman; if historical, then Kiefer, Blum or Schroeder. To distinguish the inkers is an even more maddening proposition.

On The Rack

During 1949, the *Fiction House* comics line lost impetus and George Evans, with others employed directly, was laid off. Planet Comics #64 (spring 1950) contained his last new art, for the final instalment of *"The Lost World."* There would be only eight further issues of Planet, until its winter 1953 finale (#73). Planet and Wings Comics supplanted new material with reprints, hidden mischievously under striking new covers. New title, Ghost was also reprint initially. This was contrary to *US Postal Service (USPS)* regulations, for second class mailing rights, which required new stories plus a text story, in compliance. Text pages were also dropped for; Ghost and Wings (sporadic), Jet Ace, Man O'Mars, The Monster, Planet and War Birds. The usual off-sale month (printed on the front cover) also became erratic.

There is also the annual statements of ownership, which disappears after 1949, excepting the final issues of Fight and Rangers. This was another *USPS* condition being ignored. With the exception of Jungle Comics, Jumbo Comics and Planet Stories pulp, the 1950s was a period marked by sporadic publication and quarterly dating. Rival, *Avon* also released many year-dated one-shot comics during the early 1950s. As both companies were distributed nationally by the giant *American News Company (ANC)*, it is tempting to think these comics were to be sold like paperbacks, in hope of finding a new possibly adult

Maurice again at work on this unusual horror cover for Jumbo #163, 1952.

THE ADVENTURES OF SHEENA

BY FRANK "RAMONE" MOTLER

Skin Deep

In an online reminiscence from 1985, S. M "Jerry" Iger (1903-90) claims *Sheena* as his invention. She had been envisioned for the British comic, Wags, described by Iger as *"a black and white tabloid that enjoyed a large European circulation, and was handled by EPS." (Editors' Press Service).* This was at the behest of Eduardo Cardenas, Iger's contact at *EPS*, who wanted a *"knock-off"* of the popular Tarzan strip. Iger's choice of name, a mischievous variant on the derogatory slang, *"sheenie"* (Jew). Here, *Sheena* made her formative appearances, illustrated by Mort Meskin (1916-1995).

The genesis of Wags was detailed by renowned historian Denis Gifford (The International Book of Comics, *"The Yanks Are Coming!"*) He notes it as the brain-child of the American businessman Joshua B. Powers and his New York based *Editors' Press Service, Inc.* The idea was an all-American package of family-oriented newspaper strips. It would also be printed in America, in full colour, but destined for English speaking countries elsewhere. The earliest version of Wags was for the Australasian market, premiering with the 8th September 1936 issue. The British first edition followed on 1st January 1937. Early features included the humorous *Smitty, Smokey Stover, Winnie Winkle, Mutt and Jeff*, plus the adventure oriented *Tarzan, Tailspin Tommy, Terry and The Pirates*. A break-away occurred at the British end when associate T.V. Boardman went off to found Okay Comics (first issue, 16th October 1937), taking several of the US strips with him.

Jungle Fever

In 2002, Iger's partner of the time, Will Eisner (1917-2005) recalled (The Comics Journal #249), *"Iger had established connections while editor of Wow! with an outfit called* Editors Press, *which sold comics to foreign countries. It was an interesting company, and its story should be told. It was operated by Joshua B. Powers, who had originally been an American intelligence agent. He was probably secret service or something like that. South America was his beat. When he retired, he had an idea that he would sell comic strips to newspapers in Latin America — comic strips and cooking features and stuff like that. But his idea was that he wouldn't get paid in money by those papers: instead, he would get space. Then he would sell the space up in the States to outfits that wanted to advertise in Latin America. There were a number of companies like toothpaste and soap manufacturers that were selling to Latin America, and they were looking for cheap advertising space. Powers would sell them space at less than the price they would pay if they went to the newspapers themselves. Before long, he had grown into a substantial syndicate in the foreign market. And he sold to other countries. He sold comics in England to a magazine called Wags. Iger got him as our first customer."*

After this initial contact, several of the Iger-Eisner strips appeared with Wags #17 (23rd April 1937). It is the 14th January 1938 release (#46) that is immortalised as the first appearance of *"Sheena, Queen of The Jungle."* It also has Vernon Henkel's *Gallant Knight*, plus *The Count of Monte Cristo* by Jack Curtiss. The latter, a pen-name for Jack Kirby, no less. The title continued until #88 (4th Nov-38). The Australian edition also featured *Sheena* and is thought to have survived until 1940. When the first *Fiction House* comic (Jumbo Comics) appeared, *Sheena*'s earliest adventures were slotted into the package. *Sheena* appears in cameo on the covers of issues #1, 3 and 9, with her first notable appearances on the fronts of Jumbo #13 and 15 (1940). With issue #17 (July 1940). *Sheena* became the cover feature, until sidelined by the horror themes of the last few issues.

audience. This would have been via AVC's network of tied retailers, obliged to take whatever the company submitted. Whatever, by the time the *big-six* were enlivened, all were past their centenary issues and Jumbo Comics at issue #160 (June 1952) before the change took effect.

Art Decade

The new decade (1950) witnessed several new comic titles: 3-D Circus, 3-D Sheena Jungle Queen, The First Christmas (3-D one-shots, 1953), Apache (one-shot, 1951), Cowgirl Romances (12 issues, 1950-2), Ghost Comics (11 issues, 1951-4), Indians (17 issues, 1950-3), Jet Aces (4 issues, 1952-3), Knockout Adventures (one-shot, 1953), Long Bow, Indian Boy (9 issues, 1951-2), Man O'Mars (one-shot, 1953), The Monster (2 issues, 1953), The Spirit (5 issues, 1952-4) and War Birds (3 issues, 1952). It was in this period, the *"big-six"* lost its original meaning. Now, any of the above could be shown alongside the 1938-40 originals, within the familiar advert. Complimentary to these, were the following new pulps: Indian Stories (3 issues, 1950), Stories of Sheena (one-shot, 1951), Tops in Science Fiction and Tops in Western Stories (2 issues each, 1953), Two Complete Science-Adventure Books (11 issues, 1950-4), Two Western Romances (3 issues, 1950), which became Two Western Action Books (12 more issues, 1951-4).

Will Eisner and Gerry Grandenetti's cover for Spirit #4 from late 1953.

Love and Rockets

Cowgirl Romances started life in 1950, with straightforward Iger shop art. By issue #5 (1951), the finer work associated with the later *Fiction House* covers was to the fore. Issue #8 and 9 displayed "good-girl"s in peril (by Whitman) and in a complete break, #10 (summer 1952) supplanted the Iger interiors with high octane Pete Morisi, Jack Katz (not Williamson/Frazetta, per Overstreet) and a very stylish Baker strip, *"Stars Fell On Arizona."* Here, the western action is on a movie set, involving an unnamed girl (the titular Arizona, perhaps) and her death-defying attempts to draw the attentions of leading man, Tom Hartley. This gives a clue to its origin, *FH*'s Movie Comics #4 (1947). Morisi's art continued for the final issues (Cowgirl Romances #11 and 12, fall 1952, winter 1953), complimented by more of Maurice Whitman's stylish covers and interiors.

SHEENA (Continued)

Funny Animal

Sheena also had her own comic book series during 1942-3 (#1-4). The iconic final cover lifted from Jumbo #20 (Oct-40). A second comic book series began in fall 1948, continuing the original numbering (#5-18), which ran until winter 1952. It was during this period, the favoured pulp one-shot appeared, Stories of Sheena, Queen of The Jungle (spring 1951). The *FH* vision of *Sheena* was rounded out with a 3-D Comic book in 1953. This was reprinted in the May 1985 Sheena 3-D Special #1 *(Blackthorne Publishing)*, with a stylish new Dave Stevens cover and anaglyptic separations by Ray Zone.

Israel Waldman's unauthorised *IH* series (c 1958-64) reprinted Sheena #18, under an Everett Raymond Kinstler cover borrowed from Avon's White Princess of The Jungle #3 (Sheena #9). A *Sheena* movie appeared in 1984, starring Tanya Roberts, which was adapted in a Marvel Super Special magazine (#34, June 1984), with sympathetic Gray Morrow art and painted cover. It was compiled later as a two-issue *Marvel* comic (Dec-84, Feb-85). As part of *Fiction House* revival, *Blackthorne's* Jerry Iger's Classic Sheena #1 appeared in 1985. A second TV series, with Gena Lee Nolan in the titular role and some character modernisation, ran in the US from 2000-2. Bill Black's *4C Comics/ Paragon Publications* lines have obtained the rights to reprint all *FH* characters/ stories, by owner Thurman T Scott. This excluded *Sheena*, whose rights had been sold previously. In a separate deal, current owner Paul Aratow allowed *4C* to reprint Iger's heroine alongside an unsympathetic restaging by *London Night Studios*, during 1997-8. (At the time of writing, Aratow and filmmaker Steven E de Souza have taken charge of her current incarnation, releasing Sheena: Queen of the Jungle 99c Special, *Devil's Due Publishing*, March 2007, as a prelude to a re-launch.)

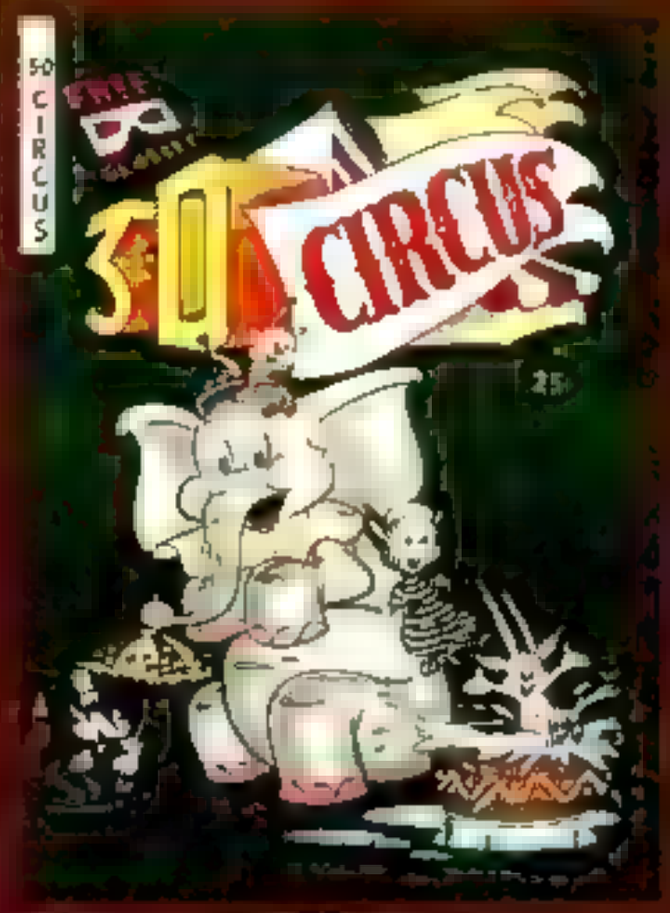
A Paragon of Virtue

In such titles as Golden Age Greats #9, 14, Jungle Girls (series) and The Golden-Age Sheena Queen of The Jungle (1999), Bill Black's *4C Comics* showed the consistency and craftsmanship of the Iger period. The latter with Golden Age Greats #14 are particularly recommended for their scholarly introductions,

Though brief, the final trio of Planet Comics (#71-73; 1953), boasting *All-New Amazing Space Adventures"* are worth investigating. A run of beautiful covers, which had begun with the reprint issues, #65-70 (1951-3), culminated here. Several would have been good enough to grace *EC*'s Weird Science or Weird Fantasy, such is their appeal. Inside, Bell, Discount, Bill Beaulis and Jack Abel work their magic, assisted by Mike Sekowsky, Whitman and others unknown. If you can live without the cover originals, the contents are available more readily, via Israel Waldman's reprints (Planet Comics #1, 8, 9 and Space Mysteries #9, *IW/Super*). At the least, you should collect these. Man O'Mars is also available in two forms, as 1953 *FH* original or *IW* reprint. The titular story is new, by unknown hands, complimented by Murphy Anderson's artistry, reprinted from an earlier period.

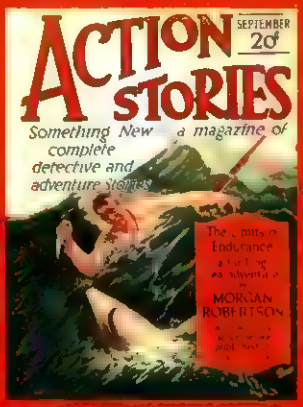
Rose Tinted Glasses (Supplied)

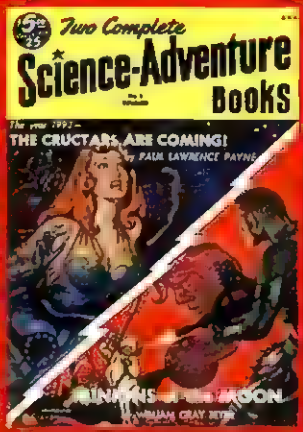
As part of the 3-D boom, *Fiction House* launched three one-shots, Circus, Sheena and First Christmas. All priced at 25c each, glasses included. The first two look to have been assembled by Iger's shop, featuring unused stories gathering dust in the studio. These were converted to anaglyptic viewing (red/blue or red/green glasses), with only two or three levels of 3-D. The contents of Circus contain several characters that featured originally in Iger's in-house one-shot Bobby Comics *(Universal Phoenix Features Syndicate,* 1946). These were *Bobby, Zingo The Zooper Zebra, Pell and Mell.* They were supplemented by Frank Little's *Crossbones Charlie,* who had appeared in Crown Comics #4 (winter 1945), a *Golfing/McCombs* title featuring Iger art. The individual stories are different, suggesting a second issue of Bobby, cancelled before publication. The oversize, First Christmas has a Kelly Freas cover to recommend it. Inside, it features a series of one-page tableaux, depicting scenes from the birth of Christ. The 3-D Sheena is the most common of the three, but also the most desirable. There are two *Sheena* stories, an untitled *Tabu* yarn and *"The Great White Lion,"* the most effective of the quartet. Overall, the three dimension effects from Iger/*FH* are uninspired in comparison to the *EC* duo, which remain the epitome of 1950s anaglyptic comics.



Above one of Fiction House's rare ventures into the world of 3-D, 3-D Circus #1 again from 1953.

From left to right, the Canadian version of Sheena's premier, followed by the rare 3-D issue from 1953, issue #2 and then #13 again both Canadian editions, and finally a swiped cover from Jumbo #20 for Sheena's revived fourth appearance in 1948. Over the page Irish Mealla as Sheena from 21st Century Archives.





Page 25: Jumbo Comics 164, Planet Comics 67, Wings Comics 125

Page 26: Fight Comics 82, Cowgirl Romances 9, Jumbo Comics 1, Planet Comics 14, Jet Aces 3, Jungle Stories Vol 2 #9 (Winter 1943), Wings Comics 118, Rangers Comics 66, War Birds 2

Page 34 (this page): Fiction House's first pulp from September 1921, Action Stories Vol 1 #1, Frontier Stories (Winter 1946) Two Complete Science-Adventure Books Vol 1 #6 (Summer 1952), Detective Book Magazine (Spring 1945) Wings Vol 9 #8 (Winter 1943) and the final Fiction House pulp Planet Comics Vol 6 #11 (Summer 1955).

DELROD KERN IS IN LOVE WITH HIS SECOND COUSIN, THE LOVELY LURINDA LEE LAWSON. 'ROUND HERE THAT'S NOT A BIG DEAL!
OH, ONE SO DEAR TO MY POOR OLD HEART, THESE HERE FLOWERS ARE JES' FOR YOU 'CAUSE I KNOW YOU LOVES FLOWERS.
OH, DELROD! TEE HEE!
BE MAH BRIDE, LURINDA LEE! AH CAIN'T LIVE WITHOUT CHEW!
OH, ALRIGHT THEN. TEE HEE!
DELROD IS A MAN WITH A PLAN WHICH IS TO GET RID OF THE FAMILY CEMETERY AND SELL THE THEN-UNENCUMBERED LAND!
I KNOW YOU WOULDN'T APPROVE OF THIS, HONEY, BUT THE DIRT DON'T GIVE A DAMN.
LATE IN THE DAY, DELROD DOES HIS "DIRTY WORK" WHICH MEANS HE MUST SIFT THROUGH THE RICH LOAMY MUCK FOR BONES AND TELLTALE BITS OF WOOD. NOW IF HE GETTING
THE DIRT
JUST TO MAKE THINGS INTERESTING, EVERY NOW AND THEN THE DIRT PRESENTS AN ACTUAL FACE... A REMINDER OF WHAT IT REALLY IS AND WHAT DELROD IS RIPPING THROUGH AND DESECRATING IN THE NAME OF MONEY!
HEH. SORRY, GRAMPA WALT OR AUNTIE JESS, OR WHOEVER YOU WAS!
BUT DELROD'S CONSCIENCE ONLY RUNS SO DEEP...
THE HELL WITH ALL Y'ALL OLD BASTIDS! BIDNESS IS JUST BIDNESS ANYHOW!
WHAT MY GAL DON'T KNOW WON'T BOTHER HER NONE!

THE FINAL STEP IS TO GRIIND ALL THE INCRIMINATING BITS UP AND FEED THEM BACK TO THE DIRT...
GOT THIIS IDEA FROM THAT FARGO MOVIE.' THAT WAS SOME KIND OF MOVIE, THAT WAS.' HYUCK!
GOOOOD-NIIIGHT LADIEEEES!
AND SO IT WENT...
NOW I GOT ME SOME CLEAN LAND TO BUILD ON SINCE ALL THEM OLD DEAD FOLKS IS GONE. GONNA GIT RID O' THIS OL' CEMETARY FENCE AND GIT SOME YANKEE INVESTORS DOWN HERE FOR A LOOK AT MAH "FARM"!
AHHH... DRINK HEARTY, HEAR?
WHAT DELROD DIDN'T KNOW WAS THAT THIS DIRT WAS ONCE A BURIAL GROUND FOR EXTINCT INDIANS WHO ATE PSYCHEDELIC TOAD SKINS, AND THE HOME OF RADIOACTIVE WORMS FROM A SECRET WORLD WAR TWO BIO-WEAPONS PLOT AND HAD FURTHER BEEN SHOT INTO SPACE IN ONE HUGE CHUNK AS PART OF AN EXPERIMENTAL ORBITING GRAVEYARD TEST.' OTHERWISE HE MIGHT NOT HAVE BEEN QUITE SO CAVALIER... NOTE: THIS IS FOR THOSE WHO REQUIRE A LOGICAL EXPLANATION FOR FANTASTIC EVENTS IN FICTION.

AND THAT JUST ABOUT DOES IT/GOODNIGHT, YOU NASTY OL' DIRT. TIME TO WASH THE STINK OFFA ME ONE LAST TIME!
HOW RIGHT HE IS!
URRR...
DURRRR...T!
DURRRRT, DUUURT HURRRT!
THATTT HURRRT DURRRT. STEPSSS FROM HIS FEEET... URRR.
FEEL LAK I WAS TIED TO THE WHIPPIN' POST, TIED...
URRR, DUUURT MURVINNNG, DURT FEEL GURRRRD...
IT TAKES A WHILE BUT THE DIRT MAKES ITS WAY TO THE LOVING COUPLE'S HUMBLE COUNTRY HOME...

GURRRL! DURT LIKE HURRR!
SNAWWW. GAZAZ..
WANT GURRRRR!...
WHAT THE CHRIST!
NUUURGH!
YOU HURRRT DURRRRT!
RUN, LURINDA LEE! AH CAIN'T HOLD IT BACK!
WHAT IS IT, DELROD? OH MAH GOD!
THE BULLETS MERELY ANGER THE DIRT, CAUSING IT TO GROW TO GIGANTIC SIZE!
UUUUURRR! WANT HURRR!
EEE! OUR HOUSE!
GOTTA GO FIND THE SHERIFF OR SOME-DAMN-BODY!

BITS OF DEATH TUMBLE AND SURGE TO THE SURFACE AS THE DIRT'S RAGE BUILDS!
NNUUUUNNN! WANT GURRRL!
IT SOUNDS LIKE IT'S TALKIN'!
DON'T WORRY, BABY! THAT THING AIN'T CATCHIN' US NOW!
WHAT IN THE...?
DELROD, LOOK OUT!
USING ITS AMAZING DIRT POWERS THE DIRT HAS SIMPLY TRAVELED THROUGH THE ACCOMODATING EARTH LIKE A FISH THROUGH WATER TO CUT OFF ITS FLEEING ENEMY AND HIS GIRL WHICH IT HAS TAKEN A KEEN INTEREST IN!

HOLD ON, HONEY! I'MA KNOCK THAT THING TO KINGDOM COME!
KUH-POOM!
AIEEE! EVERY MAN FOR HIGSELF!
UPON IMPACT THE DIRT INSTINCTIVELY SHIFTS ITS VERY STRUCTURE BECOMING SOFT AND EXPLODING IN A HUGE CLOUD OF DUST!
WHAT IS ALL THE- OH MAH GOD!
HOLD ON, DELROD! WE'LL HELP YOU!
ROUSED BY THE TUMULT, SEVERAL OF DELROD'S NEIGHBORS RUSH TO HIS AID!

MAYBE NOT...
URRRGUUUGH!
LURINDA LEE! GIT UP, GIRL!
GURRRL... PURRRRDEEEE...
ICK! GASP! NGH!
OKAY YOU BIG BROWN BLOT! NOW YOU GONNA GIT YOURS! LET'S SEE YOU DEAL WITH THIS!

UURRR! CAN'T HOLD GURRRRLLLURGH!
EEEEEEEEEEK!
YEEEHAW!
THAT TAKES CARE O' THAT! HE CAIN'T DO NOTHING AS MUD!
EWW... ICK!
SEE, HONEY? AH KILT IT FOR YEW! WASN'T NOTHING BUT A PILE O'...
OH DAMN! NOW WHAT?
HONEY, WHY IS THIS THING AFTER YEW?

IT'S THE GRAVE DIRT, LURINDA! AH'M SORRY I DUG UP ALL THEM FAMILY STIFFS AND GROUND 'EM UP TO--- EEEYYYAAAARGH!
OH, DELROD! HOW COULD YOU?
YEW PROLLY SHOULDN'T HAVE DID THAT!
MOMENTS LATER, THE GOOD OLD BOY IS GONE!
WELL, SO TIME PASSES AND DELROD BECOMES ONE WITH THE SOIL OF HIS FAMILY LAND AND THE DIRT IS QUIET.
OH SOMETHING DONE GROWN UP FROM DELROD AND HIS OLD DIRT! THANK YEW, FELLERS!
AH DEW LOVE FLOWERS.

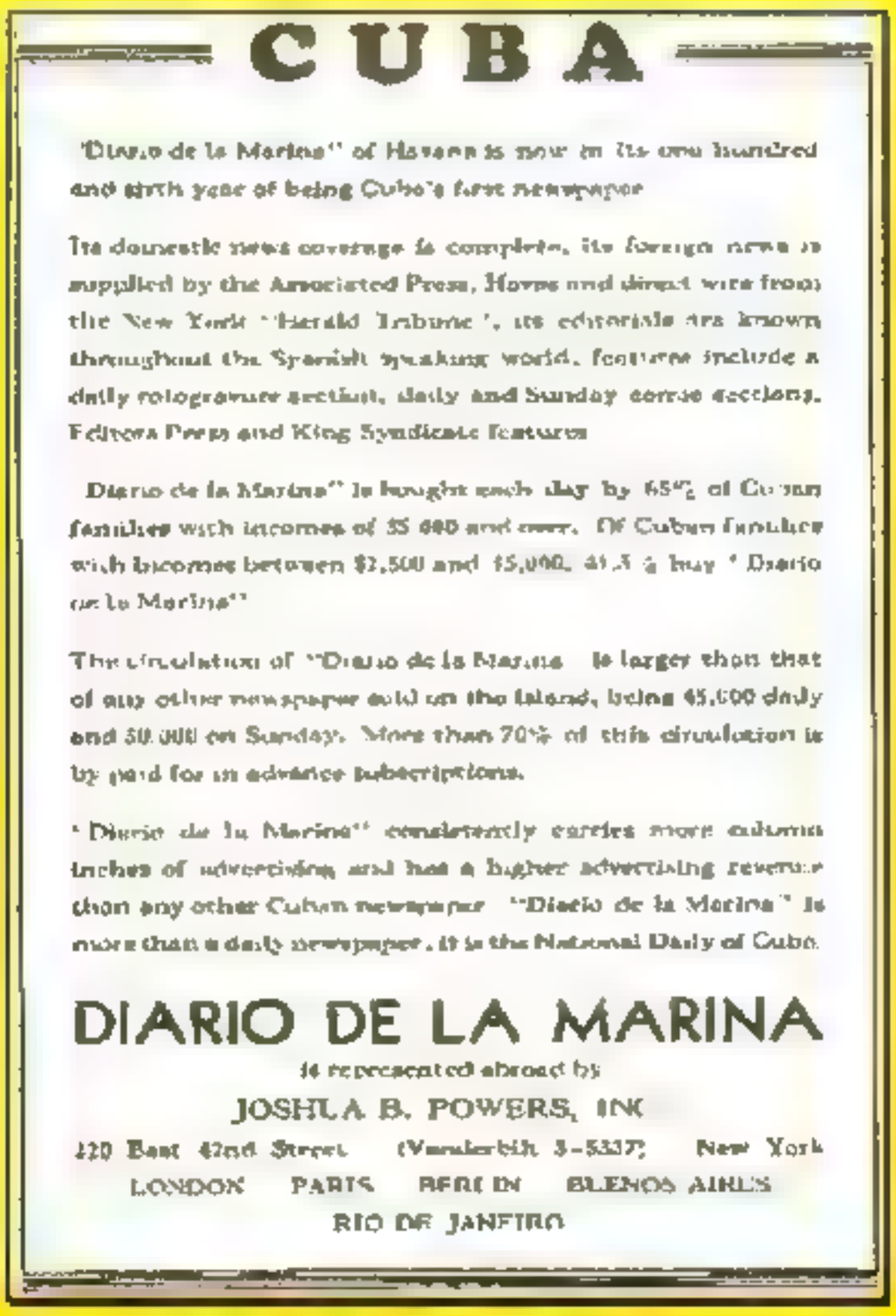
THE SONG OF THE DIRT

It can't be stopped
It can't be hurt
It's the Dirt!
Beware the day
It's no longer inert
It's the Dirt!
It's crumbly and brown
It's all around.
It's under your feet.
It's under the street.
It's under your house.
It's home to the mouse
The worm and the bug
The mole and the rat
Sweep it under the rug
Keep it under your hat.

It's no good to panic
It's strictly organic.
All your ancestors
Their animals too
Are one with the Dirt
And you will be too,
Ashes to ashes
Dust unto dust
We all become dirt
We have to
We must.
It hardens to rock
And crumbles to sand
Falls into the sea
Gets washed up as land.

It lasts so much longer
Than mere flesh and blood
Mix it with water
Its name becomes mud.
You can run, even hide
Stay strong and alert
But when you have died
Dig it, you're Dirt!
We plant our seeds in it
It nourishes crops
We plant also our loved ones
Our moms and our pops.
And up spring the flowers
The trees and the grass
The dirt is just waiting
To receive your dead ass.

TERROR TALES
WEIRD
HORROR
TALES FROM THE
THROUGH THE
EERIE
YEARS
CLASSIC
HORROR
WITCHES
A Comprehensive Study of the Eerie Publications
Black and White Horror Magazines 1965-1982
by GENE M. BROXSON



CUBA

"Diario de la Marina" of Havana is now in its one hundred and sixth year of being Cuba's first newspaper

Its domestic news coverage is complete, its foreign news is supplied by the Associated Press, Havas and direct wire from the New York "Herald Tribune", its editorials are known throughout the Spanish speaking world, features include a daily rotogravure section, daily and Sunday comic sections. Editors Press and King Syndicate features

Diario de la Marina" is bought each day by 65% of Cuban families with incomes of $5 000 and over. Of Cuban families with incomes between $2,500 and $5,000, 41.3 % buy "Diario de la Marina"

The circulation of "Diario de la Marina" is larger than that of any other newspaper sold on the island, being 45,000 daily and 50,000 on Sunday. More than 70% of this circulation is by paid for in advance subscriptions.

"Diario de la Marina" consistently carries more column inches of advertising and has a higher advertising revenue than any other Cuban newspaper "Diario de la Marina" is more than a daily newspaper, it is the National Daily of Cuba.

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From the Space Buyers' Guide, 1938

Promotional for the Cuban daily newspaper, Diario De La Marina

Sold by Editors' Press and Joshua B. Powers references

SHEENA (Continued)

plus Bill's ability to identify artists. Black also produced the collectable Authorized Photo History of TV's Original Sheena – Irish McCalla (1992, *Paragon Publications: 4C Comics*). McCalla (1928-2002) was a glamour model and her lithe beauty and athletic portrayal has fascinated fans since the series was televised originally, 1955-6. This is despite the b&w photography and modest running times (25 minutes each). Sadly, most of the 25 episodes are thought lost, along with the full colour pilot (identified by Bill Black), which was never broadcast. Only four episodes are available (region free DVD) at this time, with several others on VHS. *Aa'a'nga*, her masculine counterpart also enjoyed a long career, appearing in most issues of Jungle Comics from its premiere (January 1940), plus 20 issues of his own title, spring 1949 through summer 1954. 4C have also reprinted several of his adventures.

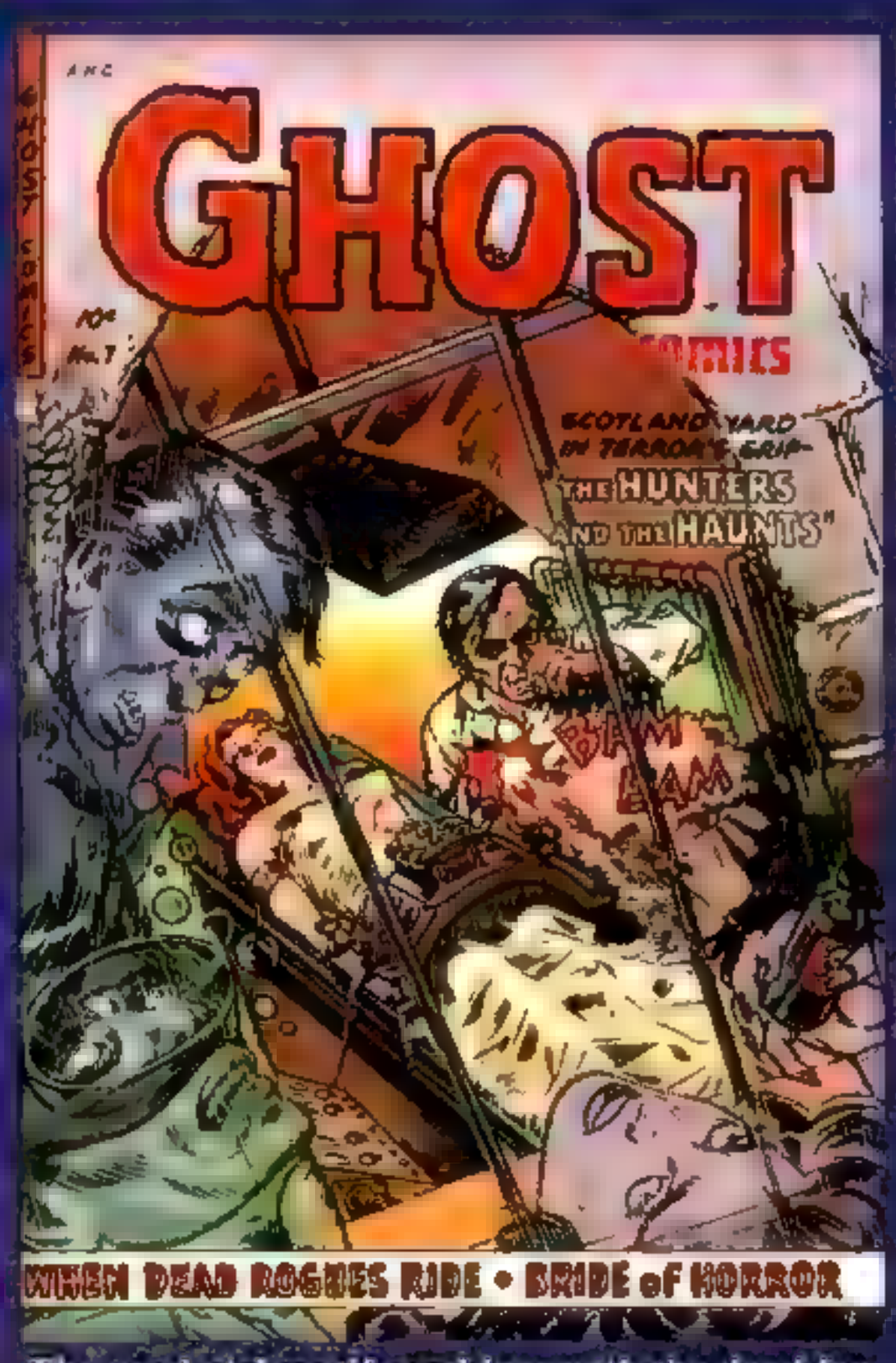
Type Face

Editors' Press Service was founded in 1933 by Joshua Bryant Powers (1892-1989) and Carlos Dávila (1877-1955). It was based in New York, NY, with outlets at various international locations. It is recognised as the first company to sell indigenous American newspaper strips outside of its own borders, but to Latin America in particular. From the 1950s, it became a publisher of foreign language books and compilations. Don Carlos Gregorio Davila Espinoza (to give him his full name) was born in Los Angeles, Chile, south of Santiago, where he was educated, graduating in 1907. Davila moved to America, where he served as the Chilean ambassador, from 1927-31. After a coup, in 1932, he become his country's President briefly, before returning to North America and exile with his family. Dávila was an award winning correspondent, also writing for several leading South American newspapers and authored We of the Americas, "*4 Brilliant Analyses of America's most pressing problems*" (*Ziff-Davis*, 1949). In 1954, he became secretary general of the *Organisation of American States*, where he died in office.

House Of Horror

Fiction House's first horror title was Ghost Comics (#1, 1951) which entered the fray with an atmospheric 'good girl' in peril cover and themed reprints, *Ghost Gallery* and *Ghost Squadron*. The second issue lifted the splash from the lead story and reworked it beautifully for the cover. Ghost Comics #4 (fall 1952) featured the first all-new story, an unsigned Beaulis and Abel classic, "*Death Is A Dream*." Issues after were all-new, barring the occasional *Dr. Drew* or other reprint. The covers for the entire run are considerable, combining *FH*'s 'good girl' emphasis with highly imaginative horror elements, to masterful effect. The covers to issues #1, 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10 are worthy additions to anyone's collection.

On Jumbo, *Sheena* was sidelined, as the covers toyed with horror themes (#161-167, July 1952 to April 1953). All are wonderfully atmospheric, despite being cramped by the tenor panels to the left (a feature of numerous American comics, *Atlas* in particular). Inside, it remained an anthology title, with *Ghost Gallery* the only horror element. *Sheena* continued to display Iger art, with the package rounded out by adventure, war and science fiction. There was also *The Eye*, an otherwise standard gumshoe, drawn initially by Bill Discount, for Rangers #66. It switched to Jumbo (#163-167), with attractive rendition by Bill Benulis inked by Jack Abel, on the first. Abel was left to draw the remainder, unaided. Brief lived, The Monster (1953) premiered with Anthony D'Adamo's "*Traitor's House*," showing increasing maturity, plus a *Dr. Drew* reprint, all under a stunning cover. Whitman's cover to the second (initialled, MW) and finale surpassed it. There were also enhanced interiors, by Benulis and Abel, Johnny Belt on "*The Dark Abysmal*," Albert's unsigned "*Tiger Kiss*," plus "*Kohinoor's Curse*," which I take to be Bill Discount.



The good girl motif combines with the dead for the cover to Ghost Comics 7.

Spirited Away

In this final period, Will Eisner returned, in *Spirit* at least. The first, in the form of *The Secret Files of Dr. Drew*. The mysterious character is derived from Eisner's *Denny Colt* original and appeared in a run of Rangers Comics from #47 to #60 (June 1949 to August 1951). Hence, the *Dr. Drew* stories found in Ghost #10, 11 and The Monster #1 are reprints. All *Drew* stories are credited to Jerry Grandenetti (1927-1999), from 1948, one of Eisner's many un-credited assistants (ghosts). Although several are signed as Grandenetti, the quality and tone (some serious, others humorous) varies, making me wonder if other ghosts weren't assisting. *Dr. Drew* has also been reprinted in the *IW* editions, Eerie #8 and Firehair #8 (Rangers #59 and #47) and more recently in Bill Black's b&w Demon Dreams of Doctor Drew #1 (1994, *Horror House*, from Rangers #47, 50, 56).

Eisner's Spirit Weekly Comic premiered on 2nd June 1940 in several US Sunday newspapers. It was printed on two pages within the colour comics supplement (Sunday funnies), designed to be cut out and folded, making an eight-page comic. *The Spirit* stories were seven pages throughout, leaving room for a page of filler by Bob Powell and others. *Quality Comics* were soon reprinting the Eisner originals, commencing Police Comics #1 (September 1942) and its eponymous anthology from 1944. The latter concluded in August 1951 (The Spirit #22), now considered a cover classic. From spring 1952, *PII* resumed the title, with a further quintet of issues. These overlap the newspaper strips demise, following the short-lived but now highly regarded *Denny Colt in Outer Space* storyline (27th July to 28th September 1952). The ghost for the majority of these, Wally Wood. Grandenetti is credited again on the *Fiction House* series. Of my solitary issue (Spirit #4, 1953), I suspect, *"The Sword and The Savage"* is the work of Bill Discount. Eisner and his Spirit were re-introduced

The debut for Ghost Comics had the horror the kiddies wanted, as well as the Fiction House damsel in distress.

21st Century Archives

SHEENA (Continued)

Joshua Powers was born in Owensboro, Kentucky, educated at University of Texas and lived for a remarkable 96 years. He was thought to have been a covert U S government agent operating in South American, with connections to pre-revolutionary Cuba (pre-January 1959), where *FPS* also operated. In 1946, Powers published the obscure Confidential Background Memorandum On Latin America and wrote the *"Publishing"* chapter for the mammoth Industrialization of Latin America *(McGraw-Hill*, edited by Lloyd J. Hughlett). Rivals, such as *All-American Newspapers Representatives Inc*, *Chalmers Ortega* and *S.S Koppe & Company* (420 Lexington Avenue, 516 & 630 Fifth Avenue, NYC respectively), operated similar services in the formative period. However, J.B Powers became pre-eminent, establishing numerous companies with extensive international publishing interests *("Export Advertising Club, International Advertising Association, Inter-America Press Association, United Press Association"* etc). For his achievements, Joshua Powers received several international awards, whilst his various companies would represent such prestigious newspapers as La Prensa (Argentina) and the NY Times.

The Shipping Forecast

He also created the namesake *Joshua B. Powers, Inc*, 220 East 42nd Street, NYC with offices in London, Paris, Berlin, Buenos Aires and Rio De Janeiro. The London office *(Joshua B. Powers Ltd*, 14 Cockspur Street, WC1) had a fellow American, Thomas Volney "TV" Boardman, Sr (c1904-1984) in charge. Hailing from Birmingham, Alabama, TV had moved to the UK in 1927, where he resided until his death. *Boardman's* Okay Comics survived just 20 issues, until 29th February 1938. However, his *T.V Boardman and Co Ltd*, *Boardman Books* and *Popular Press* imprints would become UK publishers of some regard, producing numerous comics, children's annuals, magazines and paperbacks until the late 1960s. Many would feature the illustrations of the Lancastrian artist and writer, Denis McLoughlin (1913-2002). 14 Cockspur Street remained a Boardman address until 1957, at least.

In 2000, *Editors Press Service* was absorbed into a new umbrella company, *Atlantic Syndication Partners*, based in Sarasota, Florida. The latter operates as part of *Universal Press Syndicate* (itself, part of *Andrews McMeel Universal*). *Atlantic Syndication*, *"We deliver content to the world,"* is now the worlds largest supplier of newspaper strips, responsible for the worldwide distribution (including internet) of such famous titles as *Garfield*, *Cathy* and *Doonesbury*. *Andrews McMeel Publishing*, another subsidiary, is responsible worldwide for the merchandising of *The Far Side*, *Dilbert*, *Disney* and *Garfield* publications.

All information researched and compiled by. Frank Mutler, England. *A Fatboy Production* *May 2007*Group hug, group huddle, crime syndicate, world service

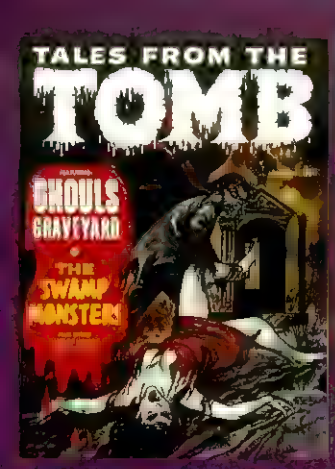
WEIRD
SUSPENSE
TERROR
SHOCK
TALES OF
WITCHES'
TERROR

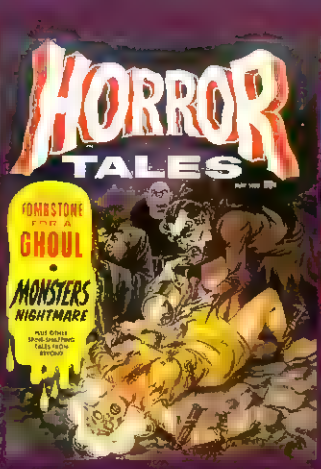
VOODOO
THE DEVIL'S ZOMBIE
DEMONS AND VAMPIRES

TOLD IN NEW CHILLING PICTO-FICTION
WEIRD
TALES OF
• SHOCK
• TERROR
• SUSPENSE
VAMPIRE GHOULS
WEREWOLF

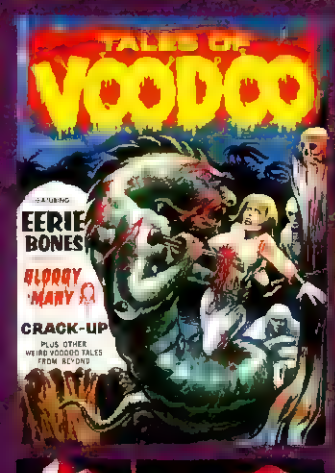
HORRO
THE SKELETON
SHOCK!

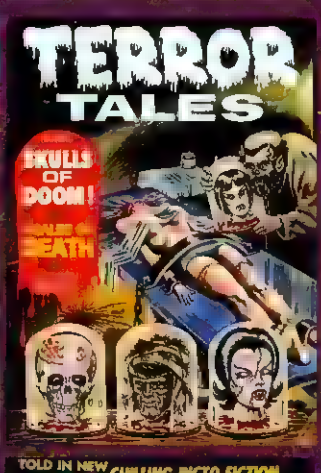
TOMB
THE FLESHLESS CORPSE
PLUS
FINGERS OF DOOM


TALES FROM THE
TOMB
GHOULS GRAVEYARD
THE SWAMP MONSTERS

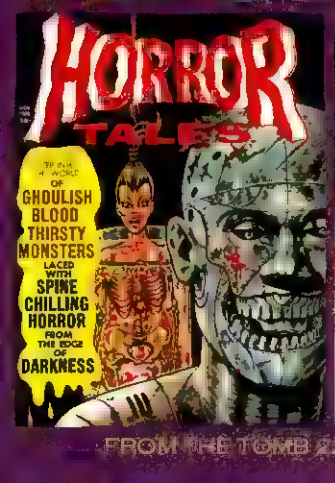

HORROR
TALES
TOMBSTONE FOR A GHOUL
MONSTERS NIGHTMARE

WEIRD
MONSTERS

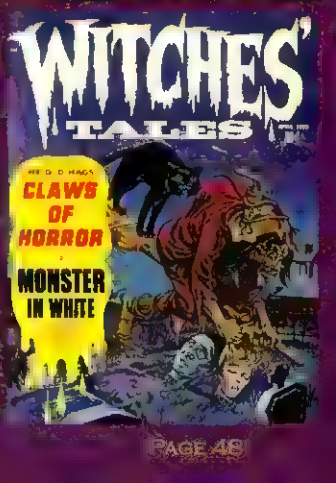

TALES OF
VOODOO
EERIE BONES
BLOODY MARY
CRACK-UP


TERROR
TALES
SKULLS OF DOOM!

TALES FROM THE
TOMB
THE THING FROM THE GRAVE
FIRE MONSTER


HORROR
TALES
GHOULISH BLOOD THIRSTY MONSTERS LACED WITH SPINE CHILLING HORROR FROM THE EDGE OF DARKNESS

TOLD IN NEW CHILLING PICTO-FICTION
WEIRD
TORTURE GARDEN
IDOL OF EVIL
DEATH ON ICE


WITCHES'
TALES
CLAWS OF HORROR
MONSTER IN WHITE

often afford, so when my mother told me to grab some I hurried off to the rear. It was there where I first saw them. There, before my disbelieving eyes, stood the most frightening magazines I had ever seen

For an instant I stood there, the sight of the six horror magazines that lay before me held me in awe. They were unlike anything I had ever seen. Witches, werewolves and vampires beckoning from the covers of each magazine, bidding me enter their world of terror. That's all it took, I had fallen in love. As I look back it is not only one of the best but also most important moments in my whole life.

The rest of the evening is now a blur, except for the feeling of being deliriously happy. I begged my mother to by them all, which to my surprise she did. I can still remember paying for them (the cover price was sixty cents but because there were dates on the covers there was no sales tax) and worrying that it might be against the law to sell such violent magazines to an underage child like myself! There was no need to worry and once I got home I stayed up all night to read my rancid purchases. The stories within were almost as good as the covers that had held my gaze in the store. After this November night with the discovery of the joy of collecting and finding something I really liked my life was never again dull.

A little more than three years later in the winter of 1974 calamity struck, a huge flood poured through Dunsmuir wiping out my entire collection. So crushing was the blow I almost didn't recover. When I returned to actively collecting in the fall of 1982 I was saddened to learn of the demise of *Eerie Publications Inc.* some six months before. After almost seventeen years in the business they were no more.

It was to take more than five years of relentless pursuit to track them down once again. My obsession drove me to write endless letters, place adverts, make long distance telephone calls by the thousand, peruse flea marts, yard sales and visit old book stores and every comic book speciality shop on the West Coast. That which had once been so common was now the most extreme of rarities, with the condition of some of the more scarce copies being tattered and dog-eared. God was to finally answer my prayers and on a beautiful spring day in May 1998 I located a high grade multiple copy nearly complete set of these elusive *Eerie Publications* at a warehouse in Brooklyn, New York (thank God for Joseph Koch, the king of all comic magazine dealers). It was, beyond a shadow of a doubt, the very best day of my life.

Now, twelve years after having completed my collection, I am recognized as something of an expert on these magazines. This is largely because I am one of the few people in the United States to have been able to acquire a full set or who has cared enough to try. For anyone to call themselves an expert on these magazines is fraught with difficulty simply because no one knows very much about them or the mysterious *Eerie Publications* company that published them. I am yet to meet anyone who has actually talked to an employee of the publisher, knowledge of the creators is scant and an explanation as to why the company went out of business is somewhat remiss. *Eerie Publications* really are something of a horror mystery.

No less mysterious than the company are the magazines themselves. No comic book reference source lists the last issues published of the three remaining *Eerie* magazine titles, so it is difficult to determine exactly how many issues of each title were produced or what was the very last Eerie issue ever published. **The Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide** has many erroneous listings for these magazines and is largely incomplete (two of the later titles are not even included in the listings).

Over the past twelve years, I have done just about everything possible to contact former members of staff, artists, and anyone else who could tell me anything about the somewhat anonymous Eerie publishers, with little success. I have tried to learn everything about the company I possibly could, again without much success. If anyone who actually worked for *Eerie Publications Inc.* in New York City

BENEATH A BROODING, PITILESS SUN, WHERE ONLY BARREN ROCK AND JUDAS WEED COULD FLOURISH, THERE STOOD THE ISLAND. A HELL FROM WHICH NO MAN COULD RECKON DISTANCE. BUT A MILLION MILES INTO THE DARK PAST AS MEN RECKON TERROR, TWO MEN TO THIS PIT OF HELL CAME. TWO STRANGERS WHO SOUGHT NEITHER AND INSTEAD WERE LED DOWN THE PATH OF DESTRUCTION TO A DEATH THAT NONE COULD SEE EVIL. EVIL DESERVE. HERE WAS A MADMAN WHO EXPERIMENTED WITH MUTANTS, STRANGE AND GROTESQUE BEASTS WHO SLAVERED FOR HUMAN BLOOD! IN THE END, THREE HUMANS, AND A BRUTE WHO BELONGED IN A NIGHTMARE, WERE ALL CAUGHT IN THE TERRIBLE BANE SURVIVE SAME. THE BIG RAT TRAP.
NIGHTMARE ISLAND
LUCY AND TOM BALL SHUDDER A LAST BUT NOW FATAL ACCIDENT
WHEW! YOU ALL RIGHT LUCY? WE JUST MADE IT TO THE BEACH. NOT MUCH PLANE LEFT THOUGH
AT LEAST THERE'S A HOUSE! WONDER WHO LIVES THERE?
I THINK I'VE HEARD OF THIS ISLAND DARLING. ROCK ISLAND THAT'S ALL IT AND THERE'S SUPPOSED TO BE A CRAZY OLD MAN WHO LIVES HERE. SOME SORT OF AN INVENTOR OR SOMETHING
CRAZY OR NOT I HOPE HE'S GOT A TELEPHONE TO THE MAINLAND OR A BOAT! I DON'T MUCH LIKE THE IDEA OF SPENDING THE NIGHT ON THIS DESOLATE SLAM

THEY COULDN'T DIE!
SHE WAS FLAWLESS YOU'D POINT BUT IT ONLY LED TO A HORROR THAT WAS WORSE THAN VIOLENT DEATH
SOMETHING WRONG WITH EVERY GIRL NOT ONE IS PERFECT BAH
JEREMY POSTON WORLD AUTHORITY ON BEAUTY JUDGES ANOTHER CONTEST
HE HARDLY SEEMS TO BE LOOKING AT THEM LATELY HE ACTS SO BORED OR SOMETHING

creatively or administratively (especially during the last days in 1981) is reading this I would love to hear from you. I live in hope someone might be able to reveal more issues beyond the 293 acquired for my own collection or more information on the enigmatic *Eerie Publications*, Inc. will come to the fore.

An Introduction To The Eerie Publications, Inc. Black And White Horror Magazines.

Eerie Publications, Inc. plied their magazines of illustrated horror in comic book format over a period of seventeen years from their office in New York City. Originally published by Robert W. Farrell, and later Mr. Lenny, their first title, Weird, debuted on the stands in the autumn of 1965, and continued publication until the end of 1981. Unlike the *Warren* magazines, **Creepy** and **Eerie**, it was patterned upon, Weird (and later the other *Eerie Publications* magazines), did not use new story material, rather it relied entirely on those tales first seen during the pre-Code horror years.

This in itself was a significant contribution to the genre of collectible illustrated horror magazines in the U.S. in that it reintroduced these vintage tales of terror not seen since the early 1950's. In using a magazine format they escaped the restrictions of the Comic Code which had pretty much put the whole horror comic book industry out of business in late 1954.

The Ajax/Farrell line of horror comics, **Voodoo**, **Haunted Thrills**, **Strange Fantasy**, and **Fantastic Fears**, were a major source of material with some of their offerings reprinted as they originally appeared, while others were re-titled and then slightly altered. A variety of generally unknown artists also rendered tales from many other pre-code titles including **Chamber of Chills**, **Witches' Tales**, **Black Cat Mystery**, **Tomb of Terror**, **Weird Terror**, **Horrific**, **Tales of Horror**, **Beware**, **Mysterious Adventures**, **Beware Terror Tales**, **Weird Mysteries**, **Web Of Evil**, **The Beyond**, and **Out of The Shadows**.

It will be the outrageous cover artwork displayed each and every month on their six titles that this company will be remembered. Although unbelievably camp and at times darkly humorous, these covers featured graphic depictions of senseless butchering and brutality, insane torture, female bondage, and sadistic perversion. Frightening laboratory settings displayed sickening scenes of grisly mutilations, random dissection and dismemberment, decapitation and disembowelment. They seemed to revel in an endless parade of death, depravity, and destruction, unlike anything else on show on the stands at the time.

From the latter part of 1968 through until 1969, these magazines produced the most

visually appalling and offensive cover artwork ever seen on any magazine published in the United States. It was designed deliberately to shock and disgust, grabbing the would-be reader's attention, thus increasing the magazines' marketability. This tasteless overuse of blood and gore on the covers gave these magazines a distinct style and visual appeal to both the buyer of the time and the hard-core horror magazine collector of today. Later issues became so excessive in their vulgarity that severed tendons, arteries, and jugular veins became replaced by mechanical cogs, nuts, and bolts to indicate robotic rather than human destruction.

Early in 1970, the cover artwork was toned down to feature graveyard scenes abounding with more traditional film monsters such as werewolves and vampires in violent, bloody battle, usually menacing a scantily clad female in bondage. The thematic style of the cover art became formulaic and at length tedious. Nonetheless, these lesser quality covers were to continue for the next eleven years. It wasn't unusual for these images to be repeated, with slight variations and in numerous composites, until the demise of the company in late 1981.

Here is a complete listing of all the **Eerie Publications** horror magazine titles published, the total number of issues produced by each title, and the beginning and ending dates of their publication:

1. Weird	**1966-1981**	**69**	**issues**
2. Tales From The Crypt	**1968**	**1**	**issues**
3. Tales Of Voodoo	**1968-1974**	**36**	**issues**
4. Terror Tales	**1969-1979**	**46**	**issues**
5. Horror Tales	**1969-1979**	**46**	**issues**
6. Witches' Tales	**1969-1974**	**34**	**issues**
7. Tales From The Tomb	**1969-1974**	**32**	**issues**
8. Weird Worlds	**1970-1971**	**5**	**issues**
9. Strange Galaxy	**1971**	**4**	**issues**
10. Weird Vampire Tales	**1979-1981**	**10**	**issues**
11. Terrors Of Dracula	**1979-1981**	**8**	**issues**

Illustrated Horror In The 1960's: The Early Years.

As previously mentioned the very first Eerie Publications magazine, **Weird (Vol I # 10** cover-dated January 1966), appeared on the stands in October 1965. Looking at the front cover (which depicts a rampaging Frankenstein-type monster terrorizing crowds on a busy city street) and the interior contents, it was clearly evident that **Weird** had been formulated and designed to capitalize on the tremendous success of the *Warren* magazine **Creepy**. There are obvious similarities in the title, lettering, and logo with both opting for the black and white magazine format of illustrated horror featuring monster type covers. They each made use of "*picto-fiction*" (comic book panel pictures) rather than text for storytelling and they shared the same format of short horror stories with no continuing series as well as endorsing the surprise shock ending.

Warren Publishing had broken new ground with their horror magazine **Creepy**. When it saw publication in 1964, it was the only black and white comic style horror magazines on the market, making it fresh in approach, and accordingly found popularity with a brand new audience. By the autumn of 1965, **Creepy** had been so successful **Eerie** was added to the *Warren* portfolio. When you consider the timing and format there is no question in my mind *Eerie Publications Inc.* designed Weird to appeal to the same fans that had made Warren's endeavors so immensely successful.

In addition to the similarities described above, **Weird** took something else from its illustrious counterparts. The horror hosts Uncle Creepy and Cousin Eerie, whose sardonic commentary was already infamous, provided the introduction to each of their tales and with its first issue **Weird** magazine introduced its signature horror host, "*Morris the caretaker of Weird*." Morris would welcome the reader to each issue rather than introduce each story as the horror hosts at Warren did, relating old world folklore customs, superstitions, remedies, and oddities. He was to appear in the next eleven issues of **Weird** (usually on the inside front cover) for a period of about three years, but was discontinued with

the twelfth issue (**Weird Vol 2 # 10** cover dated December 1968)

There were some major differences between the companies. *Warren Publishing* employed a staff of accomplished comic book writers and artists in 1965. Their early cover art, mainly by Frank Frazetta and Gray Morrow was unparalleled in its day with the interior story art supplied by such luminaries as Reed Crandall, Joe Orlando, Alex Toth, John Severin, Johnny Craig, Gene Colan, Steve Ditko, and Neal Adams. *Eerie Publications* stable of cover artists for **Weird** was at best inferior. While the early **Weird** covers were very effective, they were in no way comparable to the concurrent covers seen on **Creepy** and **Eerie**. The interior story art of **Weird** couldn't match Jim Warren's magazines either using vintage Iger Shop artwork at the outset and then various poor quality, unknown artists at a later date.

Perhaps the most significant difference between these publishers can be found in the content of the story. The early Warren magazines featured new story material (usually new twists on old horror themes by respected writer and editor Archie Goodwin) that was generally of better quality for that time period. Weird, and much later the other *Eerie Publications'* horror magazines, did not use new writers or fresh story material. With only one exception (Frankenstein, the first story in the first issue of Weird), the early issues of **Weird** magazine were made up entirely of reprints from the *Farrell Publications* published in the 1950's under the *Ajax Comics* banner.

I can only imagine publisher Robert W. Farrell's train of thought in 1965. What most probably happened with the initial success of the Warren magazines, was the realization the market for black and white illustrated horror magazines was now ripe. He had a huge already successful inventory of stories at his disposal suitable for this new horror magazine format. The name for his first magazine was not too dissimilar to *Warren's* own **Creepy** and **Eerie**, but it was also one of the words expressly forbidden in any comic book title by the Comic Code a decade before.

The original *Ajax/Farrell* material approved by Robert W. Farrell for the early issues of Weird, were horror stories pulled straight from the 1950's. The appeal in these old horror comics is timeless, with the *Iger Shop* pages being of a most alluring quality. For this new generation of fans seduced by the *Warren* illustrated horror magazines, they must have seemed somewhat lackluster and woefully out-of-date.

This was not the first time Robert W. Farrell had set about re-packaging his back catalogue of comic book stories into a new format and directing them at a new market. Following the institution of the Comic Code, he reprinted some of his pre-Code horror stories using new titles and watered them down to overcome the stringency of these early years. They would appear in the fantasy titles **Midnight, Strange, Strange Journey,** and **Dark Shadows** under the publishing names *Ajax, Steinway,* and *America's Best* in 1957 and 1958. These castrated versions of the *Ajax/Farrell* stories appeared weak by comparison to the originals. Because of this, Farrell's new line of "*softer*" titles failed to attract attention and disappeared from the market in 1958. Strangely enough, it was these slightly altered, watered-down versions that made it to the pages of **Weird** and the other *Eerie Publications* magazine titles. This leads me to believe the original artwork was actually changed in order to produce the stories that would have been acceptable to the CCA. Thank goodness not many of the *Ajax/Farrell* horror comics stories were modified for use in the reprints of 1957-1958, allowing the vast majority of the *Eerie Publications* magazines' *Ajax* story reprints to appear as they were originally intended.

Weird, and later the other *Eerie Publications'* black and white horror magazines, reprinted stories from the original *Ajax/Farrell* horror comics published between 1952 and 1954, as well as the diluted material from 1957 and 1958. Some of the filler material used in the original *Ajax/Farrell* horror titles was reprinted in the *Eerie Publications* magazines in 1969, this was actually re-titled and reprinted from several Golden Age comic books. These tales first appeared in titles such as **Ellery Queen** (*Superior Publishing Co.*), **Rulah Jungle Goddess** (*Fox Features Syndicate*), **Seven Seas Comics** (*Universal Phoenix Features*), and **Bomber Comics** (*Melverne Herald/Elliot Publ./Farrell/Sunrise Times*).

The indicia at the bottom of the table of contents page of the first issue of **Weird** magazine lists the publisher and staff members of *Eerie Publications, Inc.* at the time of its publication in October 1965 (presumably the start of the company). The information given is as follows: Robert W. Farrell, publisher; Carl Burgos (*Timely*),

editor Roger Elwood, associate editor Irving Fass, art director, Alex Sanchez, associate art director, and Howard Seligman, production

This first issue represents something of an anomaly, in that it contains an original story (one of only four I have found in 293 issues) "*Frankenstein*" the story, which followed from the cover, was signed at the bottom of the opening splash page by Carl Burgos and Roger Elwood It was a narrative told by the Frankenstein monster, and the artwork to its credit was quite good This was a promising start , but readers would soon discover **Weird** would comprise entirely of pre-Code horror reprints (for the next sixteen issues), and it would not play host to anything new for another four years. Once the Frankenstein story had come to an end the remainder of this premiere was made up of reprints from Farrell's 1950's *Ajax* horror comics. For younger readers it must have been fascinating reading these dread classics for the first time (and seeing the *Ajax Iger Shop* artwork), many however were dismissive, looking upon **Weird** as a cheap imitation of *Warren's* more polished output

The second issue (**Vol 1 # 11** April 1966) again demonstrated how closely these early issues emulated the Warren magazines of the same period. The front cover (signed Powell) featured a vampire and werewolf confrontation that was almost a reversal of the version fronting **Creepy #4** (August 1965) A cover blurb on this second issue exclaimed "*In this issue more vampires werewolves and monsters than any other magazine!*" Since the only other illustrated horror magazines of this time were **Creepy** and **Eerie** the above exclamation almost had to have been referring to them.

The years 1966 and 1967 were the formative phase in the development of these magazines The covers to the next five issues of **Weird** (**Vol 1 # 12**, and **Vol 2 #1-4** 1966-1967) were some of the most haunting of the period The cover artists (unknown) in their use of dark imagery, luminous color, and blood red story blurbs created an unsettling atmosphere swathed in gloom, so perfect for a magazine going by the name of **Weird** While these covers could not match the quality of those adorning *Warren's* devilish duo, they were still very effective

Weird's third issue (**Vol 1 # 12** October 1966) saw the introduction the subtitle "*Tales of Terror Shock Suspense!*" to the cover and would stay there until the end of 1970 Then with the following issue (**Vol 2 # 1** December 1966) the caption "*Told in New Chilling Picto-Fiction!*" appeared and with the next showing (**Vol 2 # 2** April 1967) this caption assumed its place above the **Weird** logo Here it would remain for the next eleven years until the spring of 1978

An abundance of Frankenstein-type monsters, mad scientists, subterranean sewer creatures, metallic humanoid robots, two-headed transplants, and blood spattering battles between werewolves and vampires plagued **Weird's** cover for the remainder of 1966 and 1967 The tales within were predictably reprints from the already mentioned *Ajax/Farrell* line

The address for the **Eerie Publications** company in 1965 and 1966, under Robert W Farrell, was 315 West 70th street, New York, New York 10023 The year 1967 witnessed a change of address and ownership Mel Lenny took over as publisher and the editorial address became 150 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10011 The table of contents page for the sixth issue of **Weird** (**Vol 2 # 3** June 1967) lists the new staff lineup of *Eerie Publications Inc* as Mr. Lenny, publisher, Carl Burgos, editor, and Irving Fass, art director Mel Lenny held sway over *Eerie Publications* as it savored its most productive turn from 1967 through until 1974 It was during these years, Mel added a total of eight new magazine titles to this line of monochrome horror

Use of the original *Iger Shop* artwork from the *Ajax/Farrell* 1950's horror comic books must have been amicably negotiated in the change of ownership between Robert W Farrell and Mel Lenny because the 1967-1968 issues of **Weird** continued to be made up entirely of these reprints In 1968, Mel increased the publication schedule of **Weird** from quarterly to bimonthly with the cover price remaining at 35 cents

With Mel Lenny at the helm the style and content of **Weird's** covers became increasingly violent Throughout 1968, the covers that had only recently featured vampires, werewolves,

CARELESS CORPSE
I DON'T COME NEAR ME, YOU MONSTER YOU HIDEOUS FIEND
WELL BECKY TIME TO GET STARTED FOR THE PLANT SEE YOU IN THE MORNING!
OH DAVE I WISH YOU DIDN'T HAVE THIS AWFUL NIGHT SHIFT PLEASE DRIVE CAREFULLY
SO DAVE TABBETS LIKE MILLIONS OF OTHER AMERICANS HAD WORK IN DEFENSE PLANTS STARTS ANOTHER ROUTINE NIGHT - SO HE THINKS
IF ONLY WE'D DRIVE MORE CAREFULLY ALWAYS IN A HURRY
DAVE YOU'RE BLEEDING YOUR FACE WHAT
DAVE NO DON'T
I'LL KILL YOU BOTH FOR THIS AND THIS TIME I MEAN IT WILL YOU
YOU FIRST MY OLD FRIEND MAYBE IT'S A GOOD THING I HAD THAT WRECK TONIGHT
EEEEEEEE--
FUNNY HE ISN'T PUTTING UP ANY FIGHT! ACTS AS THOUGH HE HASN'T A VESTIGE OF FEAR
AND NOW IT'S YOUR TURN BECKY YOU LITTLE VIXEN CARVING ON WHILE AWAY WORKING FOR
NO STAY AWAY FROM ME - YOU
GO LOOK AT YOURSELF IN THE GLASS SO DARK OOOOH!
I FAINTED WELL I'LL TAKE CARE OF HER LATER NO FUN IN KILLING AN UNCONSCIOUS WOMAN
BUT EVEN THEY ALTERED SAW ME NOT GIVE TRIED TO KEEP SOME

Frankenstein monsters, and grotesque hunchback figures, began to include blood-spattered females in bondage, brutally beaten, dismembered, or being devoured alive. The cover to the twelfth issue of **Weird (Vol 2 # 10** December 1968) depicted the most sickening scene of carnage and destruction I have ever seen on the cover of any magazine (this cover is fully reproduced in the color cover gallery).

It was now **Weird** gathered momentum and at last found its target audience. One after the other the covers seemed to get better and better and ever improving sales allowed *Eerie Publications* to introduce a new title. **Tales from the Crypt (Vol 1 # 10** July 1968) was not unlike its predecessor in terms of cover art and story content. The cover blurb beckoned the reader "*Welcome to the Old Crone's Crypt...*" but the horror host, the old crone pictured on the cover, was quite different to the unnamed patron of terror waiting over the page. In any event, this anonymous horror host (who only once acted as mistress of ceremonies) described various folklore remedies and old world superstitions much the way Morris had in **Weird** for the past two years. The content found in **Tales from the Crypt** was again made up of the terrors from the *Ajax/Farrell* line. Regrettably, this title proved short-lived, with only a single issue making it from the print press. It has however acquired a distinction amongst *Eerie* collectors in being the rarest of the series and accordingly the toughest to find.

Thankfully sales must have remained steady for only a few months later, in the fall of 1968, **Tales of Voodoo** hit the stands. This second attempt to add to the line was far more successful, **Tales of Voodoo** would continue publication for the next six years, until the end of 1974. The cover to this first issue **(Vol 1 # 11** November 1968) was so typical of the company's excess. Having ascended from the depths of a voluminous pit, a slithering monstrosity then stabbed a shackled sacrificial damsel through the heart with a silver spike; blood inevitably splattered everywhere. Another unnamed horror host (indistinguishable from the one in the previous title) was again seen on the inside front cover for this one issue, this time describing folklore and superstitions tainted by voodoo.

In 1969, *Eerie Publications* entered their most prolific phase of "*gory glory*." There are four distinct reasons as to my determining this the most important year in the evolution of this line. During the winter and spring of 1969 they introduced four new horror magazines, giving them a total of six bimonthly titles. They also began to feature the gruesome covers for which they have become infamous. This year was to witness an interesting departure from the overwhelming dependency on the *Ajax/Farrell* material, instead there was a switch to the pre-Code terror from a wide range of comic book publishers. Finally 1969 saw the release of three original stories, one of which has since become regarded as a horror classic.

In the winter of this year a third title, **Terror Tales**, crawled from the grave. Its debut **(Vol 1 # 7** March 1969) featured another of the finest covers I have ever seen on a horror magazine. In this graphic depiction a headless female body was laid out on a mortuary or was it a laboratory table, while a sinister hunchback gingerly removed her severed head to place it alongside a collection of similarly decapitated atrocities. Blood once again splurged forth, this time downward in grisly rivulets onto the morgue floor. Tasteless it may have been, but to the hard-core horror enthusiasts (and collectors like myself) it was a masterfully insane rendition of death and depravity!

There was no stopping those fiendish minds at *Eerie Publications*, in the spring a fourth title **Horror Tales** was unleashed. The cover to its premiere **(Vol 1 # 7** June 1969) featured devils, demons, and as ever decapitation. A blood-smeared guillotine operated by a satanic satyr chopped the heads off an endless supply of unfortunates, leaving a mountain of dismembered

body parts. A month later came the fifth and sixth additions, **Witches' Tales** and **Tales from the Tomb**. The covers to these terrors were no less disturbing than any of their ghastly *Eerie* predecessors. The first issue of **Witches' Tales** (Vol 1 # 7 July 1969) liberally satiated itself in a nightmare scene of perversion amidst a blood stained human slaughterhouse with a maniacal witch gleefully crushing human heads, limbs, and torsos in a huge press. The cover to the first issue of **Tales from the Tomb** (**Vol 1 # 6** July 1969) resorted to a furious space creature violently tearing the arms and legs from its victims before devouring them alive, leaving the bones completely stripped of flesh. This really was an incredible scene, definitely not for the squeamish!

With these additions, the *Eerie Publications* line was now complete. I should mention the material contained in these titles was wholly interchangeable. None of them were any different to the others. Stories that appeared in one title would be reprinted again and again in each of the other titles. In effect, **Witches' Tales** did not necessarily contain stories told by or about witches and **Tales of Voodoo** did not dwell solely on the lore of voodoo. They each contained standard pre-Code horror stories covering a broad range of horror themes, and no one title was any different to the others.

Looking back at the newsstands in 1969 the readers' appetite for black and white horror magazines seemed remarkably healthy. Eerie Publications were carrying six bimonthly titles, with the addition of **Vampirella** *Warren Publishing* had just increased their output to three and *Stanley Publications* had introduced **Shock** and **Chilling Tales of Horror**. Later in the year *Major* were to bring out **Web of Horror**. The market for illustrated horror was booming and the *Eerie magazines* had arrived! It was a glorious, if not gory time.

The covers from this year are surely the most shocking and offensive of the company's seventeen years in publishing and continue to garner attention from a new generation of collectors, three decades later. They indulged in extremes of violence with bodily torture, cannibalism, sadism, perversion, meat grinders, acid vats, eye gouging, human butcher shops, decapitation and dismemberment (albeit camp beyond belief) discussed in the prelude to this article. Words can never adequately describe them! Their predilection for shock would either engender a visceral reaction of disgust or lure the casual observer.

There can be no doubt the violence and vulgarity in these covers enhanced their marketability, but there must have also been an adverse reaction to their content. Toward the end of the year, the excess was appreciably toned down, severed tendons and jugular veins were replaced with mechanical cogs and wheels to make human victims appear as robots and thereby lessen the virulent impact. The artist responsible for these loathsome images remains unknown. His work was certainly effective, cartoon-like, maybe, humorously camp, yes but in many ways brilliant. There was a name that appeared on these covers, one Bill Ander. He continues to be something of a mystery and it could very well be a pseudonym. Given the nature of the subject matter, anonymity would be understandable.

Up until 1969, the *Eerie Publications* magazines had relied on reprinting pre-Code *Ajax/Farrell* material, but toward the end of the year it became necessary for them to seek out a new source. Their team of mystery artists began to redraw a selection of terror tales originally seen in several other publishers' stock of pre-Code horror comics. These first appeared in **Weird** (**Vol 3 #5** December 1969) and **Witches' Tales** (*Vol 1 # 9* December 1969). These re-vamped pages were invariably inferior to those seen in original pre-Code comics.

The departure from *Ajax/Farrell* reprints was very significant in that the amount of story material increased from around sixty-three *Ajax* horror comics to about a thousand other pre-Code horror comics. It should be remembered that not every pre-Code horror comic was in the public domain, Atlas, the most prolific publisher of the period retained full rights on all of its comics.

Even with this wealth of material, 1969 saw three original stories all by the same undisclosed artist, or at least three stories, which cannot be attributed to *Ajax Farrell* or the other redrawn versions from the pre-Code epoch. The most important of these was "*Blood Bath*" from the seventeenth issue of **Weird** (**Vol 3 # 5** December 1969), which has acquired a reputation of its own. This was a bloody elucidation of the proverbial "*bad trip*", a jaunt with LSD where the hallucinatory gore turned to gruesome reality. Set against the backdrop of the modern day 1960's, (dig those hairstyles, beads, freaky garments and hippie slang), "*Blood Bath*" can not have been pre-Code in origin as the drug LSD, the primary focus of the story, was not widely used during the 1950's. The artist employed a kaleidoscope of shifting imagery to create a surrealistic fantasy world of psychedelic illusion. These swirling hallucinogenic images combined liquid space to capture the sensory experience of LSD. The shocking finale returned the reader to the horrendous reality of severed limbs and the "*blood bath*" of an LSD trip gone horribly wrong. "*Blood Bath*" is the only *Eerie Publications* non-reprint story to be granted a special note in the **Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide**.

Listed below are just some of the countless stories amended fro the Eerie Publications magazines.

"Creatures of the Bomb!" from Harvey's Witches' Tales # 17 was re-titled and then redrawn as "Doom Creatures".

"The Dead Monsters" originally appeared as "The Black Candle of Life" in Beware Terror Tales # 4.

"Tear Him Apart" was originally Tomb of Terror #8's "The Hive".

"The Frozen Colossus" had first been seen as "Cave of Doom" in Chamber of Chills # 10.

"The Zombie Manikins" (sic) was redrawn from "The Manikins of Death" (sic) which originally appeared in Mysterious Adventures # 3.

"The Thing in the Ring" was previously "The Corpse in the Ring" in the pages of Beware # 9.

"Coils of Terror" was once Tales of Horror # 3's "The Big Snake".

"The Evil Monsters" was originally published as "The Evil Ones" in Weird Terror # 7.

"Zombie Maker" was redrawn from "Skid Row Monster" which had appeared in Web Of Evil # 19.

"It Came From the Grave" was known as "The Pale Light of . . . Death!" in Chamber Of Chills # 24.

"The Hungry Corpsemakers" had been "The Things!" when it appeared in Chamber of Chills #13.

"The Werewolf!" was taken from Out of the Shadows # 14's "Werewolf!"

The other two stories are also suitably effective, though neither can claim the notoriety afforded "*Blood Bath*" The first entitled "*The Thing In The Cellar*"(also known as "*The Beast In The Cellar*") appeared in the third issue of **Horror Tales (Vol 1 # 9** November 1969), toying with our fear of the unknown A young boy finally summoned the courage to confront his paralyzing fear of a dread voice beckoning him '*come down to the cellar*,' only to end up a charred skeleton in the ashes of its furnace The second of the two, "*Voodoo Terror*," first appeared in the sixth issue of **Tales Of Voodoo (Vol 3 # 1** January 1970) and can be best described as a sadistic excursion into voodoo, vengeance, violence, and perversion The opening splash page, featuring a graphic depiction of voodoo dismemberment, has got to be one of the grisliest scenes ever to appear in a horror magazine

Eerie Publications, Inc again changed address from 150 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10011, to 222 Park Avenue South, New York, New York 10003 The cover price on all six bimonthly titles however remained at 35 cents They had firmly established themselves as a powerful publishing force both in terms of sales and output In a mere four year period they had grown from one quarterly issue to six bimonthly titles, producing a total of thirty-five magazines brimming with their unique brand of horror The close of 1969 was to witness the passing of the "first golden era" for this darkly esoteric publishing house

Part 2 of this article will appear in our Halloween issue

From those years of gore glory you will find the following covers in his article:-

Page 45: Terror Tales March 1972, Weird April 1966, Horror Tales October 1972 Tales from the Tomb January 1973, Horror Tales May 1976, Tales of Voodoo May 1969, Terrors of Dracula August 1979, Witches Tales September 1973.

Page 46: Horror Tales March 1971, Weird October 1967, Tales of Voodoo July 1971, Witches Tales February 1975, Terror Tales January 1972.

Page 47: Tales of Voodoo May 1970, Witches Tales March 1974, Weird August 1970, Horror Tales June 1972, Tales from the Tomb September 1973, Terror Tales August 1973.

Page 48: Tales from the Tomb April 1970, Horror Tales May 1970,Weird January 1966, Tales of Voodoo November 1968, Terror Tales March 1969, Tales from the Tomb June 1970, Tales of Horror November 1970, Weird December 1968, Witches' Tales April 1970.

Page 49: The splash pages to "Nightmare Island" and "They Couldn't Die" Weird December 1966

Page 50: Another selection of diabolical intros, "The Black Terror" Tales from the Tomb November 1974, "The Demon is a Hangman" from Tales of Voodoo November 1970 and "Rendezvous with Doom" from Weird June 1967.

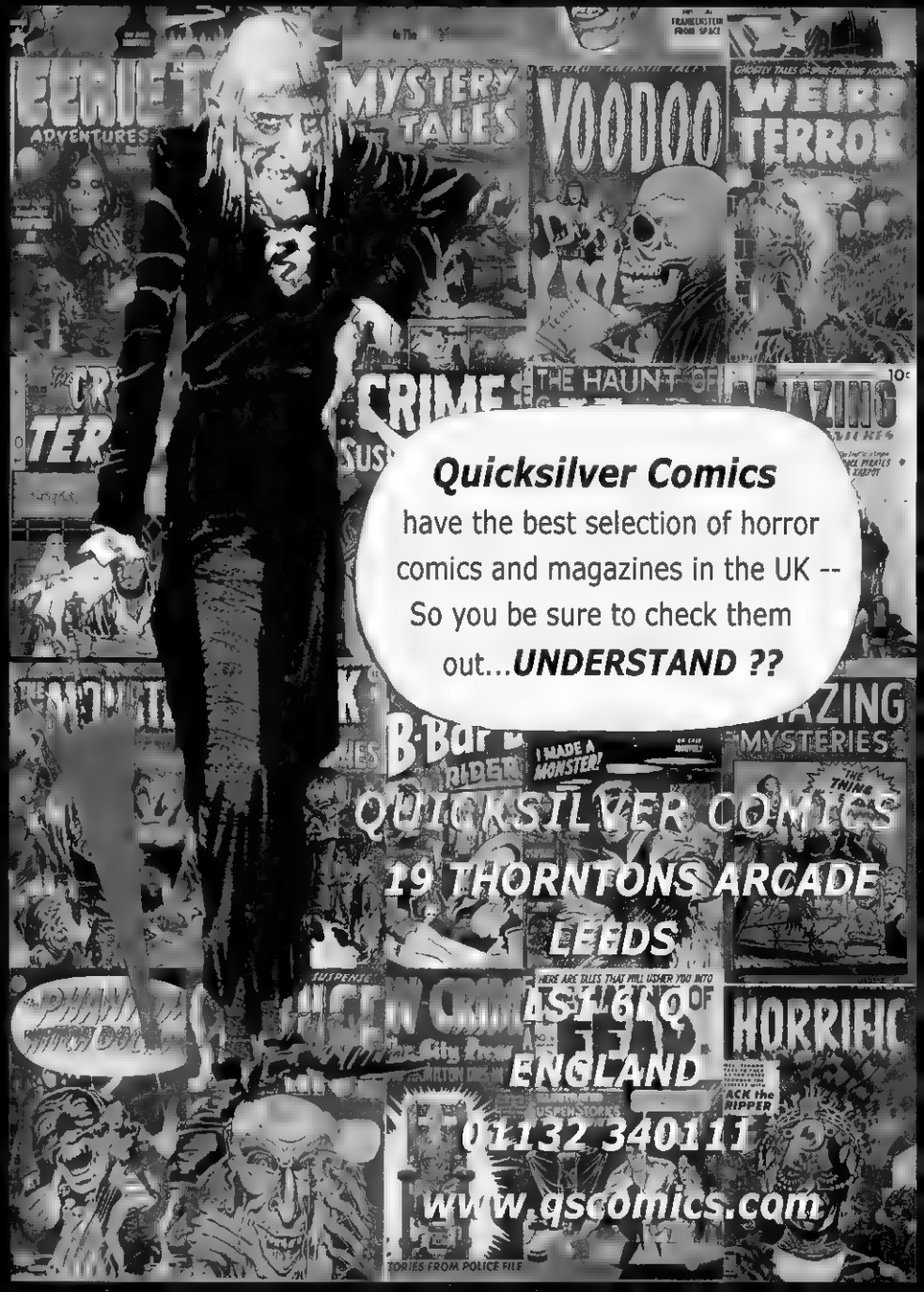
Page 51: "Dollars and Doom" from Witches Tales August 1970, "The Dead Demons" from Terror Tale March 1970

Page 52: The covers to Robert W. Farrell's Fantastic Fears 9, Strange Journey 3 and Strange Fantasy 6

Page 53: Haunted Thrills 17, Midnight 2 and Voodoo 18.

Page 54: A couple of pages from the Iger Shop styled Tales of Voodoo March 1970's "Careless Corpse"

Page 56: "Witches Revenge" from Weird 1970 showed just how grisly these magazines could be.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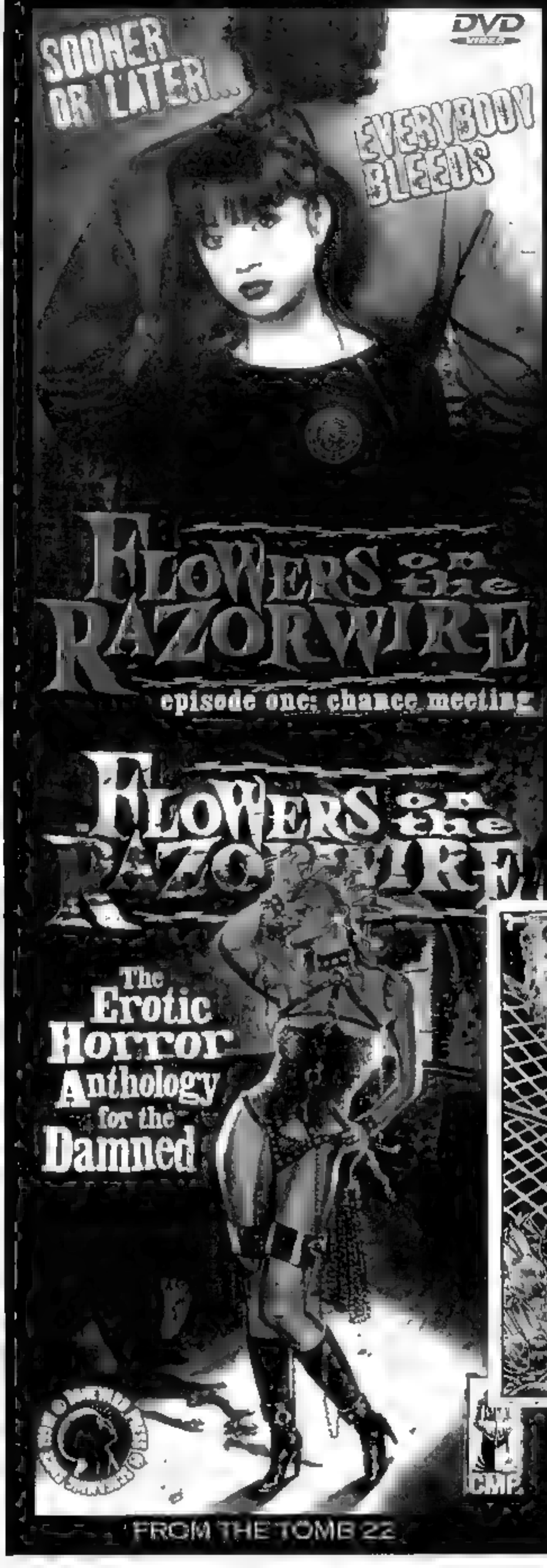
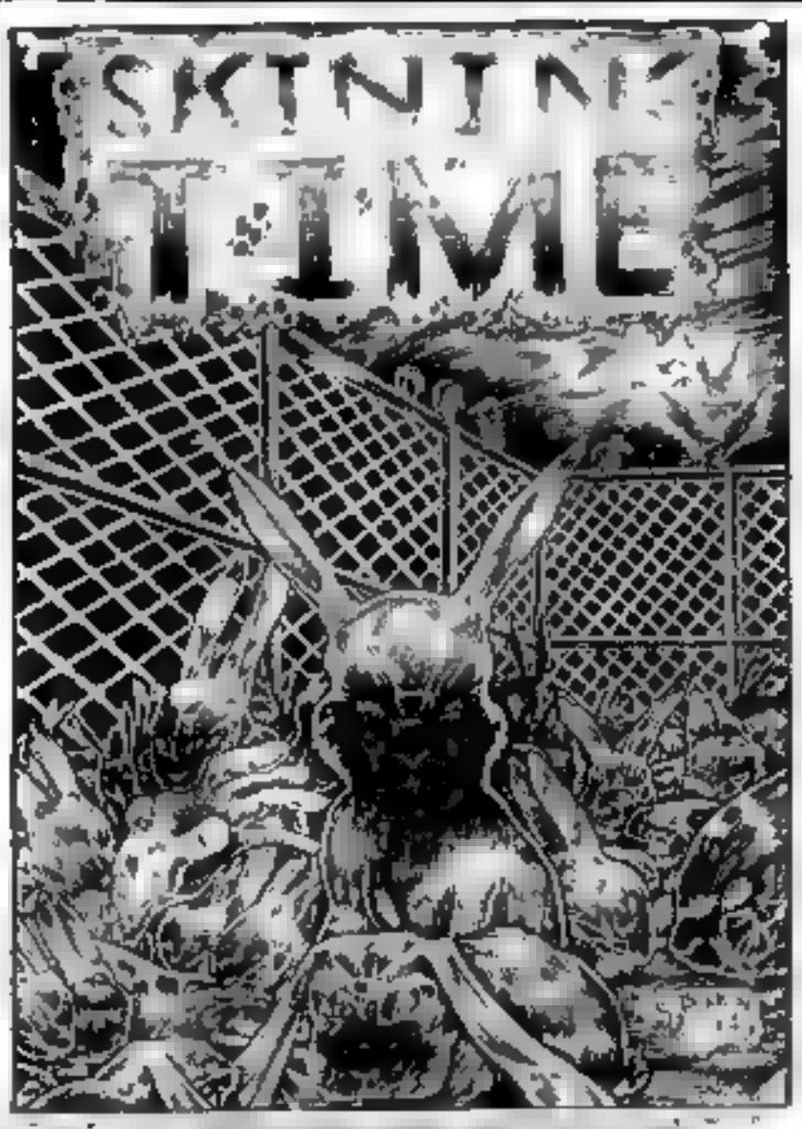


Chanting Monks Press are branching out into the film and DVD market, and from the evidence of Flowers on the Razorwire they are going to make a quite an impact. Writer Joe Monks has teamed up with director Hart D. Fisher Hal to adapt his story "Chance Meeting" from his collected "Stuff Out'a My Head". Back at the New York City Horror Film Festival back in 2003 this made quite a stir, now you will get chance to see why. Some of you might regret it because these guys want to disturb, they are out to shock and have no intention of pulling their punches. This, the first of an erotic horror anthology series syndicated for Japan, should carry a government health warning; it is most definitely not for the feint of heart! Which come to think of it rules out most of you reading this, not even the last seven years of From the Tomb has sent you lot to the grave.

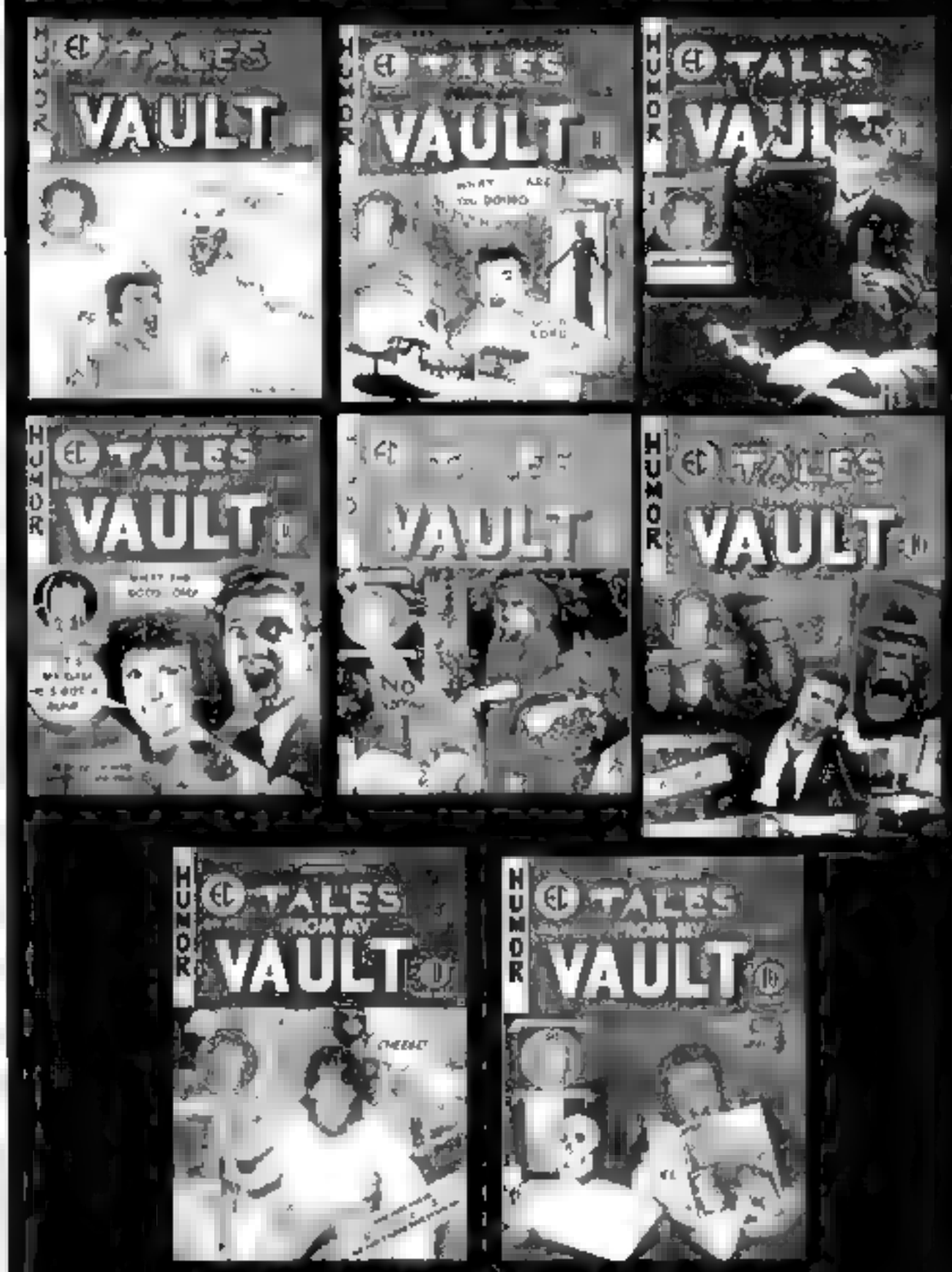
Let's tickle your fancy a little now; can you remember the temptation exuding from the luscious Elvira? Well Joe and his team have acquired the services of a dominatrix of most deliciously cruel intent, with legs you will quite literally die for, to introduce their tales from the dark side. She'll tie you down and bequeath those agonies you so long have thought you craved; all of course on her own strictest of terms and then it is you who will have to narrate that one tale of terror just to save your misbegotten life. And so it goes. The pain may be excruciating, but the tale "Chance Meeting" is as taut as you could ever expect. Imagine you're stuck in a Los Angeles lift with the most unnerving bloke in town and to make matters worse there's a nutter on the loose with a lust for bloody murder. In the narrative pinch-



tion the drama is carefully orchestrated with the camera work seeking to suffuse the ever-mounting tension. In certain shots I could see the handiwork of David Lynch, but this is in no way a cheap copy or homage; this is the real deal.

The DVD comes with a set of bonus features, which reveal something of the truth behind our friendly neighbourhood dominatrix Wanda Curtis. To say the least it is very, very amusing, reality can just occasionally be a wonderful thing. Horror comics fans will be pleased to see a Flowers on the Razorwire comic book, very much in the style of Hart D. Fisher's original series from the early 1990s, secreted with the DVD case. Let me assure you, these tales are not for kids well none that I know anyway. In the tradition established by Boneyard Press and Chanting Monks Press they are as hard hitting as you could imagine. The second episode of the DVD series "The Bunker" may well have been released by the time you read these words, this time with one Madame Veronique now assuming the starring role as the irresistible dominatrix. Episode one of Flowers on the Razorwire is recommended, especially for anyone who has enjoyed Joe Monks' uncompromising vision, whether it be in the comic book format or through his prose.

TALES FROM MY VAULT
BACK ISSUE DEPARTMENT



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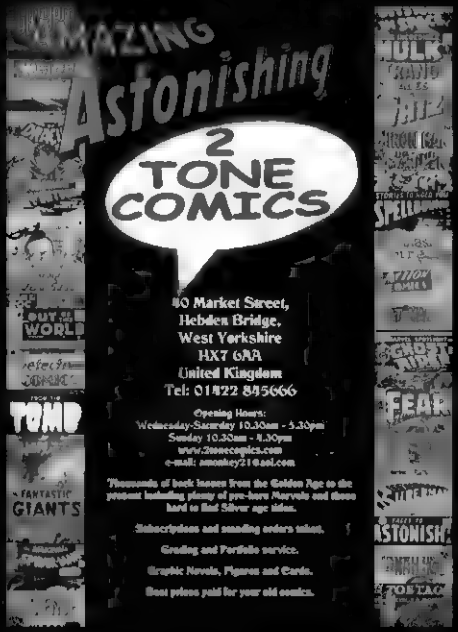
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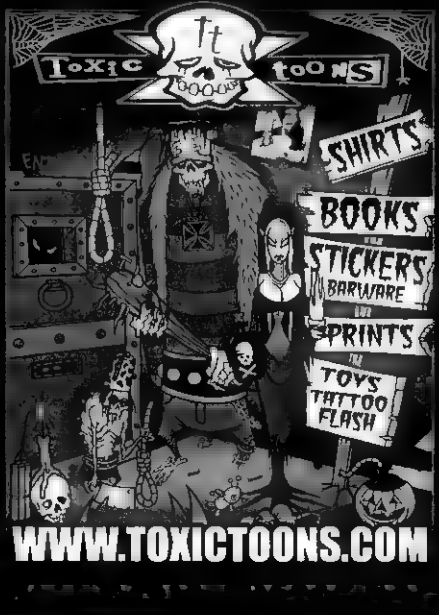
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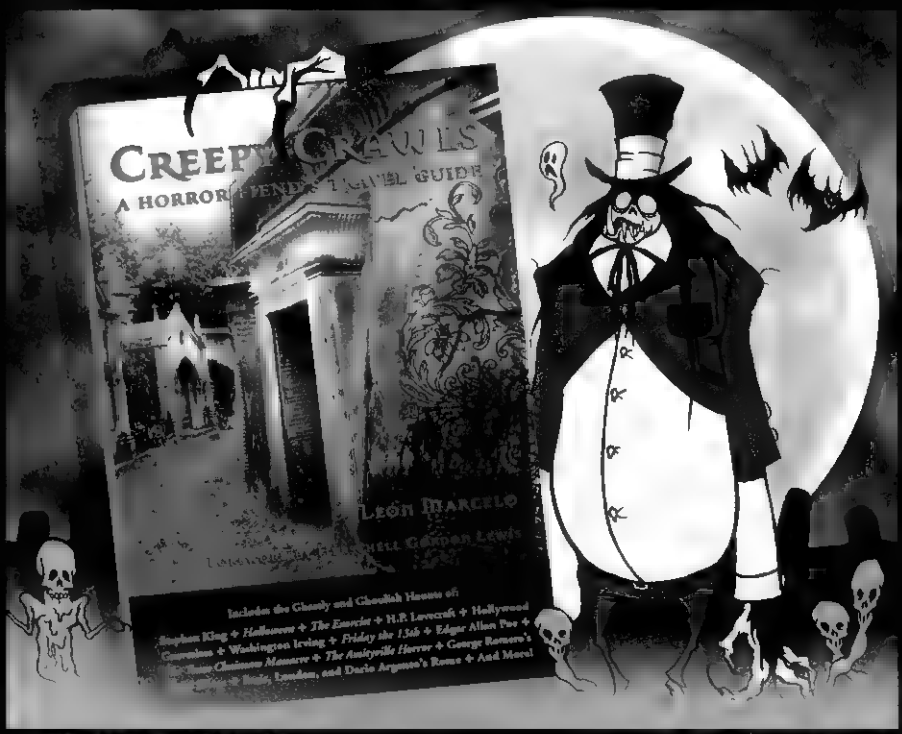
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MAILS TO THE TOMB

He.o Pete,

It's tragic about Ian Wheeler. Makes me feel a bit humble for still being here when talented people like Ian are gone

Tomb #20 is superb—I can't fault it, even putting my jaded editor's hat on! Congratulations! I've been so busy lately, I haven't had time to study my **Essential Tales of the Zombie** that arrived a couple of weeks ago.

Must dash. Keep up the annoyingly high standard

John Roche, Pembrokeshire, Wales

Peter

Congratulat ons on another excellent issue. I'm still in the midst of reading it, but am very happy you chose to do an article on Thomas Ott - an amazing artist with a fantastic ability to tell a creepy story with no dialogue. I think **Cinema Panopticum** is his best work yet.

Frank Motler's informative piece on **True Crime Comics** was very welcome, filling in a lot of background on that memorable title. The Alex Toth splash alone makes me want to pick up **V.2 #1**

I look forward to reading the B.K. Taylor interview as I am one of those who have fond memories of trying to complete the various **Odd Rods** series as a kid, and chewing much stale gum in the process I can vividly recall that powdery smell of sugar and cardboard when ripping open a new package outside the corner market

Best Wishes

Richard Byard, Californ.a.

Chewing gum and cards had a similar effect on me. Unfortunately I never saw any of B.K.'s work on this side of the Atlantic.

Dear Peter,

Great joy as **From the Tomb #20** popped through my letterbox on Saturday morning! Another great issue, it goes without say ng! This time round I particularly liked Frank Motler's "*It's Alive, It's Alive!*" which covers a virtually under-reported era, beautifully illustrated as ever Check out a similar piece by Steve Bissette in **Goreshriek #4** Frank's index is of great value, but there one or two amendments, e.g. summer 1966 companion to **Magazine of Horror** (1961, digest mag) **Startling Mystery Stories**, featuring Lovecraft, Bloch, and Seabury Quinn among others. **Shriek** is actually a full sized magazine rather than digest sized. Anyway I know I sound like a nit-picking varmint, so I will shut up. Real y, another brilliant, beautifu ly produced issue

Stephen Sennitt, Sheffield.

Cheers Stephen, Frank's article seems to have gone amazingly well, and quite right too.

Hi Pete,

Many thanks for the latest issue, another fright filled, fun packed edition. The highlight to me was the look back at the Monster Mags of yesteryear, which brought back so many good memories. To think I used to own a lot of the mags mentioned in this piece, I wonder what happened to them!

I am currently working with John Ridgway on a new Dan Dare story for **Spaceship Away**. So at the moment I am very active after a long sabbatical from drawing comics.Best wishes,

Bill Naylor, Merseyside

The standards set by Spaceship Away are what we all aspire to. I am sure your artwork will have a welcome home there.

Dear Peter,

Thanks for the latest **FTT**, excellent as usual The Horror Comics Spotlight was very interesting, particularly those Dracula stories. The cover from Eric Pigors was tremendous, powerful use of colour.

Having a weakness for skeleton covers I enjoyed your Death article. I recall Marvel using a lot of ske - eton covers on their Atlas reprints from the 1970s. Let's have more in depth interviews like the one with B. K. Taylor please. I haven't read anything by Robert Aickman, but after reading peter Coady's piece I will certainly check his work out. "*Flesh Lust*" was both well written and drawn with once again nice use of colour

You are right to pra se Frank Motler, his two p eces in this issue were simply stunning. Surely he must be the greatest comic researcher in the world! The accompanying illustrations gave them just the right atmosphere.

It looks as if I will now be checking out Thomas Ott, until now I knew nothing of his work Best wishes,

John Fennessy, St Albans.

If you have a weakness for skeleton comics wait until you discover Dark Mysteries and Mysterious Adventures, and watch what they then do to your bank account!

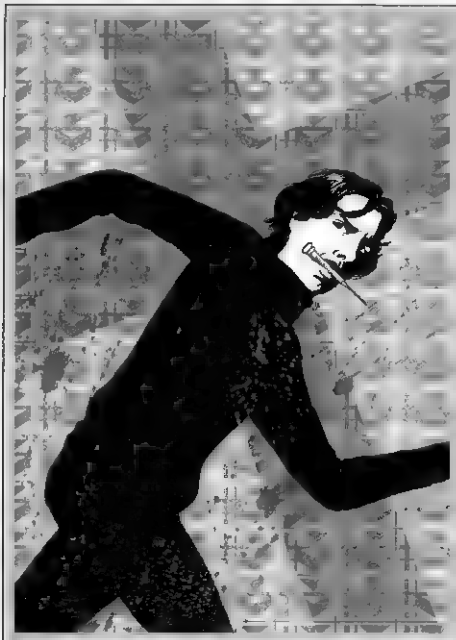
Hi Peter,

I'm still here and purchasing **From the Tomb** through Diamond Distribution here in the States I've just finished reading issue **#20** and I must say that every issue gets better and better. My favorite feature is still "*Bad American Comics*" so keep them coming.

Issue **#20** really "pushed my buttons" with Frank Motler's article on the Monster Boom of the 50's and 60's. I was lucky to be a child growing up during that time. I have been slowing acquiring the magazines I had back at that time and have managed to obtain the majority of those pictured and mentioned in Frank's art cle. I have a couple to add to Frank's list and I real y need to disabuse Frank of his notion that the **Famous Monsters** numbering jump from **69** to **80** is a "numbering glitch".

Additions to Franks database:

The **May 1939** issue of **Broadway-Hollywood Car-**



At the top James Fletcher's rendition of the vampire Martin and below Chow Martin's The Temple: The Thing That Would Not Die.

nival: Donald Gibson provides a 2½-page article on master make-up artist Jack Pierce. Accompanying the article are several pictures of Boris Karloff being made-up for *Son of Frankenstein*

The **23 May 1942** issue of **The Saturday Evening Post**: This issue contains a 2½-page story on the popularity of horror movies by Richard G. Hubler. It is illustrated with photos of some classic horror movies.

The **Nov 1958** issue of **Foto-Rama**: This issue contains an 8-page "horror contest" where readers are invited to send in the names of the pictured actors portraying classic monsters

The **March 1959** issue of **Playboy**. Hollis Alpert and Charles Beaumont provide an article called "*The Horror of it All*" concerning the then current horror boom. Even FJA and **Famous Monsters** receive a mention

The **16 August 1958** issue of **The Saturday Evening Post**. Roul Tunley provides a 4-page article on the release of the *Shock* package of horror movies and the horror hosts in various cities. John Zacherle, as Philadelphia's Roland, is prominently featured.

Finally, the **August 1959** issue of **Escapade**. Marvin Kitman provides a 3½-page article on the horror hosts in various cities, again with an emphasis on John Zacherle, but this time as *Zacherley*

Now to address Frank's statement that skip in numbering of **Famous Monsters** from **#69** to **#80** was a "glitch" Here is a direct quote from Editor Ackerman's editorial on page 3 of issue **#80**: "NUMBER 80! The last issue was **#69** and now suddenly it's spring-spring ahead 10 issues! How come? Did you sleep thru a year or fall into the Twilight Zone? No, your Editor, with your best interests at heart, realized that if, once upon a time, we had simply published 10 more numbers of **FM** instead of putting the same material in a companion magazine **MONSTER WORLD**-we would have indeed by now reached issue **#80**. And that's 10 issues nearer **#100**".

FJA was so intent on reaching issue **#100**, that he skipped issues **#70-79**, counting those 10 issues of Monster World as part of the run of **FM**. In fact, later issues of **FM** would specifically state in the masthead, *"Incorporating Monster World"*. I hope this corrects Frank's misclassification of the **FM** number skip as a "glitch".

Rudy Stotz, Oxford, GA USA

Rudy, many thanks for this additional information, it all makes sense now; as with Mr Motler Famous Monsters fans will be in your debt.

Hi Peter,

I guess that "*Curse of the Werewolf*" **HOH** cover is still working its magic, because that's what grabbed my eye (**FTT 10**); it was always my favourite HOH cover, too I'd never seen that "exploding-eyeball spaceman" cover to **HOH #5**, but now that I have, I must track that one down! But seeing a retrospective of the magazine's run was what held my interest, and then, looking at that and issue 9, I realized, "Hey! This whole THING is about Horror comics and Magazines!" Two of my favourite things in the world!

And a fine job you do, too. Hats off to not only the ton of fine research you do, but the copious amount of cover reproductions. I loved the 'severed-head cover' article - that **Fight Comics** was jaw-dropping, and I'm still laughing over that"*Gor-Blimey! It's a beedin' 'EAD!*" Ahh, the things that make life worth living... and I must say you don't see too many articles dealing with the Luddite implications of EC Comics! Comics fans aren't supposed to have any sort of awareness :) ! (I doubt if many of them would even know that word, much less who Gen. Ludd was!)

By the way **House of Hammer** WAS a great magazine, but, really, it was no **FM**! Of course, nothing really was, Famous Monsters was in a class by itself. I actually thought

HOH rather more resembled some of the Marvel magazines of that era, like **Monsters Unleashed**, with its mixture of movies and comics. I always thought it was interesting - after virtually pioneering the genres of both monster movie magazines and B & W illustrated horror, Warren always maintained that fans of one were not fans of the other, and tried to keep them separated, although there was the odd reprint from **Creepy** or **Eerie** in **FM**. But virtually everyone else mixed them, with varying results. Happily **HOH** was one of the ones that rose above the pack, one of the few that did.

Boy, Warren staked out the turf, and didn't he guard it jealously (Zealously)? I guess he pulled the same 'ashcan' stunt with **HOH** that he did with Eerie years before!

As well as doing a column for **Creepy Classics** , the people responsible for the Monster Bash convention I have also written **The Masked Wrestler and Monster Filmography** available on Amazon. They also sell my book and back issues of my 'zine, **SantoScene**

Anyway, I'll wind this up, I certainly don't want to bore you... this is a little more what the letter would've been like in the first place, but I didn't want to go to great lengths and then have it returned! So, it's good to know you're still there; thanks so much for the reply. Please keep up the excellent work; I can't wait to see some more of it! Take care, and I hope to hear from you again at your convenience.

Bobb Cotter, West Virginia USA

It's strange, maybe it's because I live over here in the UK, but I was always a bigger fan of House of Hammer. I couldn't get enough of those Hammer films back then.

Hello Peter,

Thanks for **FTT #20**, another doozey of an issue. Something I am constantly surprised at is the wealth of vintage covers you feature. Surely all these editions can't all be in such pristine order? Is there a database covers available?

Now you are reviewing movies would you consider featuring a piece on rare and recommended horror films? I have some in mind and wouldn't mind a stab at writing a feature. All the best,

John Matthews, Rochdale

Hello John, there are stacks of sites across the net specialising in all kinds of comic book covers. I have to confess I dip I into them on many an occasion to help with an article. My own collection usually has to be touched up when I show it in FTT, I could never afford pristine editions of those 1950s comics. If you fancy writing anything on horror movies please be my guest, this would be most welcome.

Hi Peter,

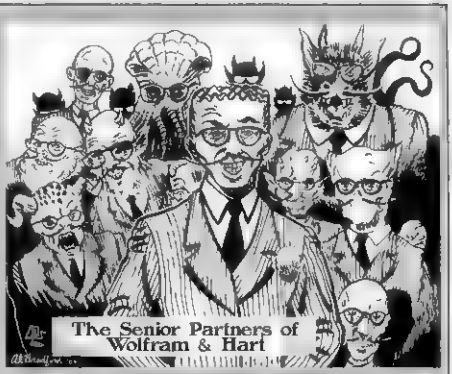
Thanks for the Halloween issue of **From the Tomb** I get the impression that you're at a cross-roads- do you really go for it in terms of meeting Diamond's demands or return to running off copies at work at lunch-time? I say go for it! I need to increase the cover price for the second issue of Pulp Mania and figure that if you're delivering a quality product for a dedicated market in a field of one, then people will pay the extra money. It just pisses me of that Diamond evidently can't see the benefits of having a diverse and interesting roster of titles on offer. Distribution is the biggest killer for any small-press mag

In terms of issue **20**, as ever *Small Press* was the first section I turned to as you also uncover a new gem. Plenty of great material for me to sink my teeth into elsewhere, in particularly the Odd Rods interview, Peter Coady's Aickman appreciation and Frank's monster mag overview- some truly rare material reproduced in those pages

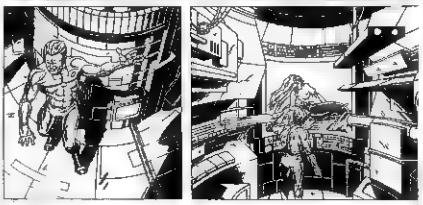
The Walking Dead is the only comic I now read and would love to read a piece on it in **FTT**- interviews with the artist or writer? I get the impression I might not be the only one who's only regular comic habit is **The Walking Dead**.

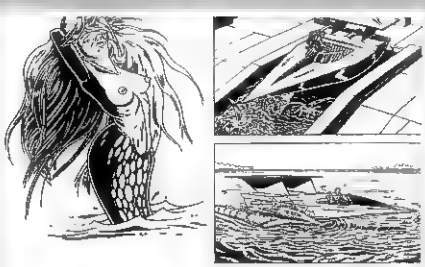
Justin Marriott, Bristol.

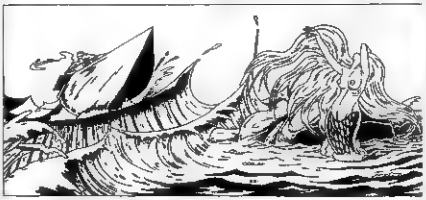
We are not down yet, far from it. The Walking Dead is

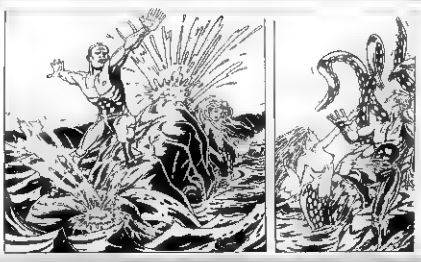


Alan Bradford places Shyster & Hart at your disposal, rather you than me looking at these boys. Below another from James Fletcher, part of his sinister Spider series from a few years back. As we will soon see he has moved on to far bigger things. Over the page Chow Martin's short strip "Mermaid" will appeal to many of you. He is yet another of those talents waiting to be discovered.









who enjoys a medicinal dose of horror and a good read, along with Deadworld, Nightmares and Fairy Tales, Zacherley's Midnite Terrors and anything by Stephern Niles.

Peter,

I recently came across something very interesting and I thought I would share it with you. You know from my previous emails that I collect old magazines with articles related to horror movies. Well I also collect old magazines with references to the banning of comic books, this includes the early appearances of **Seduction of The Innocent**.

A magazine I recently acquired has a three page article "*Should U.S. Comics Be Banned?*" by Peter Mauger. As you may have guessed, this is a British magazine called **Picture Post** and is dated **17 May 1952**. What is interesting (other than the wonderful pictures culled from then current comics) is Mr. Mauger's use of a term in the third paragraph before the end of the article. Here he states, "The whole case against these BAD AMERICAN COMICS is not..."

Bad American Comics, my favourite section of your magazine. I really enjoyed running across this in another British publication and I thought you might enjoy it too. Perhaps you (or Frank Motler) might find a copy of this magazine and can read the entire article.

Rudy Stotz, USA, the home of Bad American Comics

The history behind banning of those bad American comics over here is fascinating, but few of the people involved could remember much about it. It shows what an impact they really had.

Hello Peter,

I have enjoyed your recent branching out in to more thematically inspired horror and science fiction genres. The Aickman article is a fine example of that; *From the Bookshelf* being another. More in the same vein would be we come.

Movie rev ews seem to be an untapped resource They don't even have to be new pictures There are many excellent but not necessarily well known films out there, a couple, ten or eighty years old. It's always nice to introduce someone to a good movie.

As to the comics. how about something on those Atlas-Seabord comics and magazines Their all to short runs make them easy to collect and they lean heavy on those horror and science fiction themes. The same goes for the Hamilton magazines. Just a few suggestions to mull over.

Cordially yours,

Richard Halliburton, Perris, California.

Cheers Richard. The Atlas-Seaboard line will one day make it to the pages of this magazine. I can recall buying them when they came out. Dealers used to think there was something wrong with me when I was picking them up almost twenty years ago. There was of course something wrong with me, the two heads were a dead giveaway! Sadly I only have a couple of the Hamilton magazines; they weren't so easy to pick up over here. Hopefully I will continue to explore more relatively unknown and interesting horror movies, it's surprising how any are out there.

Dear Peter,

From the Tomb continues to get bigger and better, a fact exemplified by the huge Halloween 2006 issue. **FTT #20** is packed with entertaining and edifying features related to horror comics, as well as a piece on author Robert Aickman My favorite feature of the issue, however, is Frank Motler's "*It's Alive, It's Alive!*", a look back at the "monster boom" of 1957 to 1967, which included the rise of magazines devoted exclusively to horror films, more commonly known as Monster Magazines! I grew up reading monster mags, and remain a big fan of them to this

day

Although there were precursors, most fans consider a single issue of the French publication **Cinema 57 (#20)** to be the world's first monster magazine (and a "holy grail" among collectors, as Frank Motler notes). In my estimation the years from 1957 through the end of the 1960s represent the golden age of the horror film periodical. The most famous monster film magazine is, appropriately, **Famous Monsters of Filmland**, courtesy of James Warren and Forrest J Ackerman. Of course there were no VCR's or DVD's in those days, and youngsters like myself had to patiently wait to see our favorite vintage creature features on television, usually on a Friday or Saturday night. Magazines like **Famous Monsters** were treasure troves of inside information and rare movie stills (and yes, some corny puns) that gave rabid monster maniacs something fun to read between (and perhaps during) those delightful weekend fright films broadcast on television or at the local theatre or drive-in. I will never forget the day in 1994 when I finally met Forrest J Ackerman at a convention and was able to thank him for his pioneering efforts in the monster magazine field. I regret that I never got to meet Calvin Beck, the man behind **FM** competitor **Castle of Frankenstein**. **Castle of Frankenstein** was geared more for adult readers than FM was, and the eccentric Beck was a gifted editor and author with an encyclopaedic knowledge of fantastic film history. The Calvin Beck books **Heroes of the Horrors** (1975) and **Scream Queens** (1978) remain essential entries in my personal library.

Frank Motler does a wonderful job encapsulating a decade of monster boom history, including monster magazines, trading cards, model kits, paperbacks, comic books and even hit records. Motler's comprehensive index of items from the monster boom era is also much appreciated, as are the various magazine cover reproductions. (For more pictures, I recommend Michael W. Pierce's book **Monsters Among Us**, which reproduces virtually every monster magazine cover ever published, albeit in small size). I always enjoy the contributions of Frank Motler in **From the Tomb**.

From the Tomb has garnered praise from many quarters of late, including accolades from a number of industry notables. **FTT #19** contains a complimentary letter from none other than Al Feldstein, one of the principal architects of the EC horror line. And speaking of issue **#19**, I must commend Pete Von Sholly for his eye-popping "*Graveswelter*" cover art. That cover will either bring more readers to the **FTT** fold, or have them running in terror from the magazine shelves!

Keep up the great work on **From the Tomb**. Best wishes.

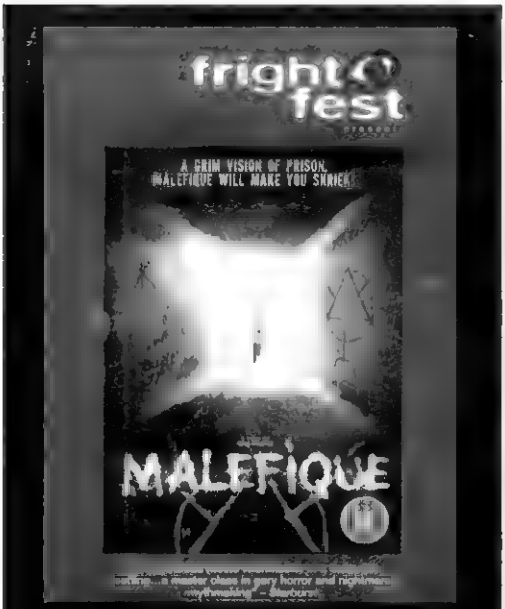
Timothy M. Walters, Muskogee, OK United States

Thank you Tim, I am glad to hear Frank's article brought back some great memories. As for Pete's cover it seems to have caused havoc everywhere it has been seen and he's such a quite fellow!

Peter,

Just wanted to congratulate you on a job very well done with issue **#21** (**Tomb** is 21? Does that make it legal now!?). The cover is a sultry departure and looks wonderful—very Craig Russell. The entire issue is a joy to the eye. If pressed, I'd say my highlight is Alan's article on the *Forgotten Dracula*—I never forgot it because this is the first I knew of it! 13p was indeed a lot of money those days! The Ditko splash on page 6 is one that has stayed with me for decades—I'm fairly certain it was run in the **Apes** weekly after it merged with Dracula and they suddenly realised they'd run out of Dracula! You know, if they make movies based on Frank Miller's stuff, Ditko's art should be even more successful on the big screen. The composition is wonderful. In the new **Comics International** there's an ad from a guy looking to set up a Ditko fanzine—more power to him!

As always, **FTT** is a wonderful pick me up, and reminder that there are happier and more gruesome things than work! Well done.



Eric Valette's celluloid terror Maléfique dating back to 2002 appears to have been overlooked, maybe because it is French in origin and doesn't have the financial clout of its Hollywood rivals. While there are so many wonderful films to have been made in France, the horror genre has never come to the fore. If you can overcome the idea of watching a film with subtitles (come on you must have enjoyed Hideo Nakata's Ring when it first appeared almost ten years ago) this is an extraordinary movie. Here you will find a horror movie that doesn't have the recurring annoyance of screaming teenagers, there are no wise cracks or moments of comic relief for the entirety of its duration. This is a claustrophobic horror from which there is seemingly no escape.

Four Carrère, played by Gérald Laroche, never bargained on spending time with a set of men of such dubious character when he stupidly used his company to commit fraud. In the wake of his crime he finds himself incarcerated with a murderous trans-sexual and his retarded cannibalistic accomplice, along with the scholarly Lassalle, who for some inexplicable reason murdered his wife. Alone with these unsavoury individuals, confined within this small space, the mood of oppression becomes increasing intense. This mounting sense of intensity is the key to so much of the terror in Eric Valette's film. Like so many other films from France, Maléfique was not the beneficiary of a large budget; it relied solely on a professional cast and crew. The four men central to this film use all act, there is no hamming it up here, the success of this scenario depends on their ability and this they have in abundance.

The discovery of an arcane volume describing how one man, Danvers, escaped from this cell almost eight years before only adds to the tension. Now there is a way out, but at what price. The book, like something from H. P. Lovecraft , is surely cursed but it becomes like an obsession to Carrère. Beyond the cell's barred window, what little we can see of the sky looks bleak, almost a mirror of the dismal confines of this claustrophobic world. If you want to experience something a little more mature than the slasher movie then please give this one a try, you will not be disappointed.

FTT will never be entirely legal! The Dracula piece was long over due and Alan did it incredible justice. I will definitely have to keep my eyes peeled for that Ditko 'zine.

Dear Peter,

Thanks for **FTT #21**. As usual great issue, but seemed particularly good this time: Clinton, Lindall, Harvey and fantastic Von Sholly strip! However my favourite has got to be Alan Richardson's *Dracula*. Re *Agar-Agar* "visual equivalent of listening to early Hawkwind albums, when you've been awake for two days" Exactly! Alan's really "got it" here; what a brilliant summation

One thing he has overlooked is the **NEL Dracula Annual**, a hardback reprinting all twelve issues, except for the covers, which blows Warren's six issue volume out of the water. Nice, black shiny hardboards with a new Maroto cover and the back cover being Maroto's splash for "The Vigi". Keep in touch,

Stephen Sennitt, Sheffield.

The twelve issue collection is something I have never seen, never say die I suppose.

Hello, Pete!

GREAT new issue- except for *Murder Ink* which is very fuzzy looking- no doubt cause I should have sent you high res files... dang. Hope your readers don't complain! Thanks for the nice review of **Extremely Weird Stories**! I bet your readership is growing continually... like a festering tumour on a bloated corpse buried in radioactive soil... or something nice like that! Yours as always,

Pete Von Sholly, California, USA

Apologies for the way Murder Ink came out Pete, this is down to me not tinkering with the images correctly. I should know better by now.

Hello Peter,

Just wanted to say I just received my copy and it looks absolutely gorgeous. Thanks for all your kind words and adding the full black and white version of cover to the interior. It's been a pleasure and I'm looking forward to work on more. All the best,

Flint Hasbudak, Bucks.

Flint your cover was exceptional, I only hope there are a few people out there who pick up on your talent.

Hello Peter!

Just spent a couple of hours this Sunday morning reading thru the new issue. Once again, I was surprised and delighted by the information and the excellent graphics! I wasn't aware of Corben's **Haunt of Horror**, he's one of my all time favourites Should be easy enough to find at my local comics shop, Jim Hanley's Universe in Manhattan. I began collecting and enjoying his art starting back in the mid 60's when he was doing strips for the fanzines. Glad to see he's still hard at work!

Loved the article on Terrance Lindall! Being a huge Matt Fox fan, I'm happy that someone with talent is drawing in the same style. I dug out my big box of **Heavy Metal** magazines and found the two stories he did for them. Don't have those Warren copies though, but will have to track down that **Vampirella 86**, it's great!

Very nice piece on the Harvey horror books! So many disturbing images left me feeling a bit queasy. Nightmares on paper, in a way, they surpassed E.C. when it comes to gory realism. Those comics are harder to find than most pre-code horror. I guess they're locked away in people's collections!

Thanks for the expanded letter's section, I'd like to see

it kept at about 3 or 4 pages every issue Lastly, thanks for the review of the film **Creep**. I love a good horror film, and this looks like it's right up my alley! Looking forward to June when issue **#22** is due.

Tom Stein CT USA.

Peter,

As ever, many thanks for the latest **From The Tomb**! There was a real mixture of the absolutely obscure, the rarely mentioned, the downright oddball and some righteous fun in issue **21**

Regarding *The Medusa Myth*, I thought I might add a few additional considerations. A popular school of thought is that a lot of mythical characters considered evil, like Medusa, are those deities originally worshipped and subsequently deposed by conquering nations In the Medusa myth we could view Libya as being invaded by sea (Medusa raped by Poseidon) and the subsequent replacement of her old Earth goddess role by Athena as being a metaphor for the conquering nation. Further allusions to seductions, or rapes, sounds like some further ancient spin to make it sound like suggestions that deals were done to make such an invasion run smoothly. . If such was the case I say, good for the old serpent-head girl for getting her own back in comics down the decades!

You're not wrong about there not being much publicity for Rich Corben's recent Edgar Allan Poe's **Haunts of Horror** series at Marvel – I'm a big fan and had absolutely no frigging idea! Fortunately, thanks to your article, I can at least now seek out the forthcoming collection. Corben and Rich Margopoulos also did a one shot comic adapting Edgar Allan Poe's **The House of Usher** for Pacific Comics, and that was subsequently reprinted in graphic album format by Catalan, topped up, if memory serves me correctly, reprints of the Warren adaptations mentioned in your article.

Congratulations on locating Maelo Cintron and interviewing him, albeit what felt too briefly. Loved Alan Richardson's piece on New English Library's publishing Spain's **Dracula** anthology in the UK the artwork was really of its time, especially the colouring Pete Von Sholly delivered a first rate comic story, with its ending surprising even this jaded old soul.

Say, have you picked up on the **DC Showcase** collections of **House of Mystery**? There are two volumes out now. Excellent value for money, terrific art, and some pretty good stories to boot!

Best, Paul H Birch

Thanks for the additional information on Medusa, a subject that continues to fascinate. I am as surprised as you are marvel Comics didn't do pore to promote Richard Corben's excellent series. I only hope the trade collection fares well, it deserves to.

Thanks for issue **#21** Wow! That is the best fan magazine I have ever seen. Chock full of great imagery Good writing. And, of course, an outstanding article on me! Great work Peter. I know Piers likes it too. Wish the Americans could see it. I will mention this mag in my next PR.

Check out my videos;

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uwngvX_mqIw&mode=user&search=

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yr2V3XZvvpE

Terrance Lindall, New York USA

Thanks for getting in touch Terrance. I do recommend anyone who enjoys Terrance's work to check out these videos at youtube.

Dear Peter,

I have just read Richard Hallibuton's letter in Issue no. **21** and it reminded me of what a fine publication Daniel Raeburn's **The Imp No. 4** (2002) is. Was it ever reviewed by you? As a general introduction to a vast and misunderstood subject, Raeburn's opus really opened my eyes to the "historieta" (comic-book) phenomenon in Mexico. It is as if every facet of Mexican culture – including its serious movies and more lurid melodramas - had been irretrievably altered by the influx of pre-Code American comics of the 50's and caught in an immoveable time-warp.

Those historietas, which come in a mind-boggling number of variants and targeted readerships, are mostly concerned with forbidden sex, sadistic violence (and therefore horror) and abuse of power They are also intimately tied in, thematically, with Mexico's long history of police and political corruption and brutality and exploitation of the poor by the rich. Raeburn explains that, although these ever-present comic books read by 95 % of the population, are looked down upon as "basura" (trash) by polite society, they nevertheless are an indispensable release valve for the country's political and social tensions and a daily tool of mental and sexual release in a traditional macho culture set upon by changing views of morality and the emancipation of women in the workplace. They even have more romantic variants that target women readers. This would explain why they are tolerated at home, on the one hand, and forbidden for export on the other. Well, that and the fact that their publishers are also tied to the prevalent political corruption culture.

The publication's many mouth-watering illustrations also point out that Mexico can boast an incredible number of artists that could rival and even shame any American comic book talent of the present, or even the Golden era, all working for poverty-row wages and relative anonymity in a highly-controlled industry

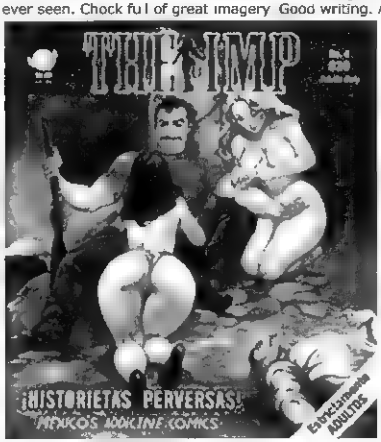
The fact remains, however, that, as tantalizing as these mostly (sexually) soft core publications are for (ahem) study and other purposes, they are still largely unavailable outside of Mexico and, of course, untranslated in other languages, as opposed to say, Japanese mangas. Something tells me that the history of comics could have been very different were it not for this slight inconvenience.

Their general unavailability also makes it problematic for a publication like **From the Tomb** to ever devote a special edition to these publications ("Bad Mexican Comics"?), although, for every other reason (including the surprising survival of the pre-Code spirit in Mexico in the XXIth Century) the richness and vastness of the subject, and the sheer number of artists involved, would certainly warrant it.

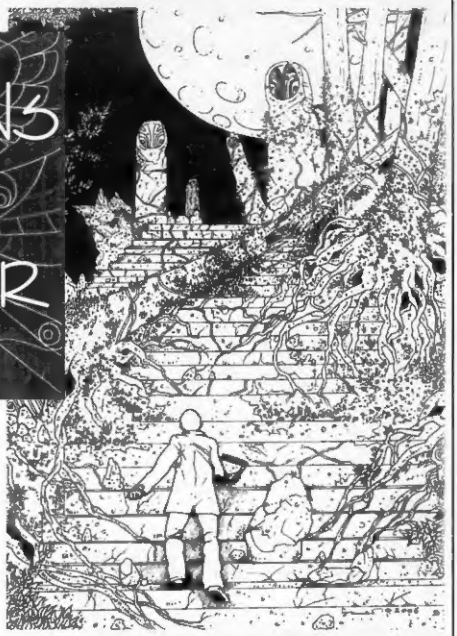
Also see this interesting article: http //www mexconnect.com/mex_/travel/bzm/bzmhistorerias.html by a Mexican anthropology student and this Mexican Wikipedia webpage: http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historieta de M%C3%A9xico (untranslated)

Benoît A. Racine Toronto, Canada

Does anyone know if The Imp ever made it this side of the Atlantic? It looks as if we missing a huge slice of comic book history here!



DARK HORIZONS
THE ART OF PETER SZMER



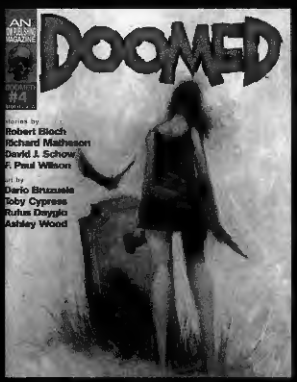
For five years Peter Szmer studied fine art in Bielsko-Biala, Poland. There he came to appreciate both the subtleties and intricacies of life and architectural drawing, painting, sculpture, inking, lettering and of course the opulence borne from centuries of art history. Surrounded by such splendour one can only wonder if he wasn't exposed to something infinitely more dark beyond the lecture halls of his chosen place of study. While his tutors opened his mind to the endless possibilities held in this world of creativity, Peter conspired with something altogether more abstruse. For him there would come the ancient calling echoing across time and space in the guise of H. P. Lovecraft's abominable creations. Your eyes have no doubt already been drawn to the loathsome presence across the page; "*Pickman's Model*" in all its odious majesty waits to corrupt your very soul and usher you to a domain mortal man could never endure.

Although tormented by the foul creations of the baroque prince, Peter has found time to apply his pencils and brushes to a graphic novel uncovering the lives of ancient Celts set against a backdrop designed to unsettle. A publication date has as yet not been agreed, but as soon as it is made available it will be announced in these pages. It is not surprising when he lists his favourite writers he refers to Lovecraft himself, along with Robert E. Howard, Graham Masterton and Clive Barker, a veritable treasury of terror.

Artistically his influences at the drawing board are somewhat diverse, but of equal interest. Mike Mignola is a firm favourite, which occasionally comes across in his ability to simplify form using a similarly effective approach. Peter however is inclined to become substantially more absorbed in detail than Mike and the control he excerpts over minimalist flows of panels. Dark fantasist Gerald Brom has also had a bearing on the malignancy at play in Peter's subject matter. Amongst Brom's endless assignments comes work for both Dark Horse and DC, and if you are a fan of big motorbikes his painting "*The Devil's Rose*" from his latest chilling collection has to be seen to be believed. Rembrandt and not surprisingly Goya (take a look at the battlefield horror in his rendering of "*Sagan*" from his up and coming graphic novel) have also inspired his creative approach. Goya, it should be remembered, in his later years produced several studies inspired by witchcraft.

Along with the masterfully macabre "*Pickman's Model*", several more inclusions have been sifted from his unhinged vision, each exhumed for your delectation. To the right you will see "*Thing on the Doorstep*" and "*The Hound*", over the page "*Ancient Maggots of Crom*", "*Trough Thy Gate of Silver Key*" and finally "*Ancient One*". If these unearthly renditions have a recondite appeal then please check out Peter's work at graphcraft.deviantart.com, he will be only too pleased to hear from you.

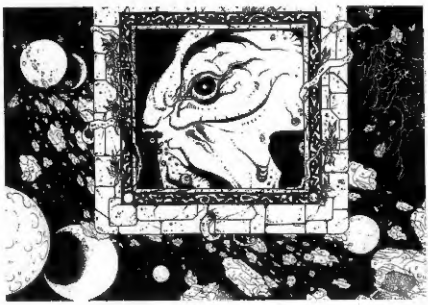
DOOMED



IDW's Doomed has succumbed to breath its last with the appearance of this its fourth issue. The more cynical will say it was doomed from the very start; a black and white horror anthology magazine hasn't survived in more than two decades. This however was a valiant, if lamented attempt to resume a distinguished comic book tradition.

Chris Ryall, along with Ashley Wood and Ted Adams should be commended for their endeavour; this was a worthy shot at recreating the essence of those inspiring titles spawned by Warren and Skywald. I have felt for many a year more could have been made of the immense catalogue of horror languishing in countless publishers' vaults. These tales of disquiet deserve a home where they can once again plague the dreams of your waking hours, interpreted anew for the pages of a comic book magazine. Alas they will have to look elsewhere. Before Doomed was finally interred, a collection of tales conceived by Robert Bloch, Richard Matheson, David J. Schow and F. Paul Wilson were visualised by a modern assembly of artists, including Ashley Wood whose impressionistic cover art continues to beguile. Of course it would have been fitting to have had Messrs Corben, Cintron and Wrightson in these pages, but there are new generation of artists out there, each of whom I am no doubt sure will be lauded with accolades wherever they conspire with the damned.

Try and track these issues down when you visit the conventions and fares that will take place in the forthcoming months. You won't be disappointed, just aggrieved this magazine was doomed at such an early point in its conception.



EXCITING SCIENCE FICTION ADVENTURE STORIES
No. 2
CAPTAIN SCIENCE
FEB.
Captain Science conquers the Cat Men of Phoebus
Space Pirates Attack From The Moon

Captain Science #2 Feb 1951

Wings Vol 8 #11Spring 1950

Weird Science #13 (2) July-Aug 1950

Captain Science #3 April 1951

Wings Comics #112 1950

Wings Comics 94 June 1948

Captain Science #7 Dec 1951

Wings Vol 11 #2 Summer1948

Wings Comics 89 January 1948

Bad American Comics Presents

Shadow Of A Doubt

by Frank *'MacGuffin'* Motler

The Trouble With Harry

Good evening ladies and gentlemen… Sorry, forgetting myself; welcome back gentle reader, to another thrill-packed instalment of *Bad American.* In keeping with the two-part article about *Fiction House,* we are celebrating a series of inspired swipes that adorn the covers to the obscure Captain Science comic, 1950-1. The contents are of mixed quality, with notable stories by Wally Wood (in #1, 4 and 5), rubbing-shoulders with hasty hack work by Phillip "Tex" Blaisdell, Myron Fass, Don Perlin and others unknown. That is not to say that these artists weren't capable of better work, elsewhere. The title ran seven issues, before successive changes to Fantastic #8-9, Beware #10-12 and Chilling Tales #13-17. The final title is famous for Matt Fox's first known comic story (#13, inks most likely) and his stylish covers to #13, 15 and 17.

The publisher for these was *Youthful Magazines, Inc,* part of a complicated set-up involving players who were or would become famous elsewhere. Among the latter, were Adrian B. Lopez and his brother Armand, who would leave comics to found the *Lopez* line of magazines. Not mentioned in the formative period but thought connected was Frank Armer, a partner of Harry Donenfeld going back to the infamous Spicy pulp lines of the 1930s and 1940s *(Arrow Publishing/Culture Publications/Trojan Publishing).* Donenfeld became the boss of *DC* and its distributor, *Independent News.* Early *Youthful* issues were distributed by *Leader News* (as was *Entertaining Comics),* with later issues distributed by *Independent,* while later issues of Stamp Comics *(Youthful/Stamp Comics, Inc)* were carried by the giant *American News Company.* Companion titles include Attack/Atomic Attack, Indian Fighter and Redskin/Famous Western Badmen. Most were signified by name changes along the line.

Captain Science #6 October 1951

North By Northwest

There were associated companies, too. *Pix-Parade Inc,* published Youthful Love Romances/Youthful Romances/Daring Love comics and the brief-lived, Pix Parade (1941), a large format cheesecake magazine, while *Western Comics, Inc,* published their earliest comic book, Gunsmoke. This ran sixteen issues (1949-52), with horror themes in the last few. To add to the complications, interested parties (or their wives) would found the second generation of companies, *Master Comics, Inc, Ribage Publishing Corp, Story Comics, Inc, Trojan Magazines, Inc* etc, swapping titles and NYC addresses between themselves as they went. Crime Mysteries, Crime Smashers and Western Crime Busters *(Ribage* or *Trojan)* reprinted complete comic strips from such Armer pulps as: Fighting Western, Leading Western, Private Detective, Super Detective and Dan Turner Hollywood Detective. The strips were introduced during 1949, an abortive attempt to revive the flagging format. Colour was added for the comics, as the pulps were b&w. Altogether, an interconnecting group of some complexity that deserves more attention. Watch this space.

Wings #91 March 1948

The Man Who Knew Too Much

The first swipe appears on the cover to Captain Science #2 (February 1951), which quotes from two sources. The 'good-girl' in peril seems a mirror of the Wings pulp cover (vol.11#8, spring 1950). This might seem fanciful, until you compare the flying saucers, undoubtedly lifted from Al Feldstein's version on Weird Science #13 (second issue, July-August 1950, *EC).* The next issue (Captain Science #3, April 1951) repeats the process, by combining the terrified female tied precariously to the bonnet of an aircraft, with the flying saucer that originally was buzzing *Captain Wings's* aircraft. This time, a cockpit has been added to enable our scientific hero to engage in the action. The originals can be found on Wings Comics #94 and #112 (June 1948 and 1950), respectively. The covers to issues #4 and #5 were by sci-fi ace Wally Wood, so no criticism here.

Captain Science #6 (October 1951) returned to the fertile imaginings offered by *Fiction House,* by re-visiting the bound females from Wings Comic #89 and 91 (January and March 1948). Unusually, *Fiction House's* pulp elder had beaten them to it, with another flighty femme strapped to a rocket (Wings vol. 11#2, Summer 1948). The last Captain Science (#7, December 1951) reworks the imperilled girl from its predecessor, merely moving her arms behind her, in a gesture of restraint. As mentioned, the next duo were released as Fantastic, whose covers also suggest prior inspiration. We will leave these for another occasion, as it's time for my correspondence course. I'm learning to tell my left hand from my right. Useful for giving directions, I'm told. Doing quite well, as long as the felt-tip remains legible…. See you next time.

All information researched and compiled by: Frank Motler, England (copy edited by Barry Forshaw) *A Fatboy Production May 2007*